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Scottish Poets

Edited by GEORGE EYRE-TODD

SCOTTISH POETRY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

VOLUME II

JAMES BEATTIE—ALEXANDER GEDDES—JAMES MACPHERSON—JAMES MUIRHEAD—JOHN EWEN—ISOBEL PAGAN—MRS. HUNTER—ALEXANDER, DUKE OF GORDON—ALEXANDER WATSON—JAMES FORDYCE—HECTOR MACNEIL—MICHAEL BRUCE—ADAM AUSTIN—MRS. GRANT OF CARRON—SUSANNA BLAMIRE—RICHARD HEWITT—JAMES TYTLER—JOHN LOGAN—ELIZABETH HAMILTON—JOHN LOWE—ROBERT GRAHAM OF GARTMORE—LADY ANNE LINDSAY—WILLIAM DUDGEON—ROBERT FERGUSSON—JOHN DUNLOP—MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN—JEAN GLOVER—JOHN PINKERTON—JOHN MAYNE—ROBERT BURNS—THE AUTHOR OF "THE HAR'ST RIG"—GAVIN TURNBULL—JOHN HAMILTON—ANDREW SCOTT—ANDREW SHIRREFS—WILLIAM BEATTIE—ALEXANDER WILSON—CAROLINA OLIPHANT—EBENEZER PICKEN—RICHARD GALL

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JAMES BEATTIE.

1735-1803.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century the literary traditions of the most northerly university town of Scotland—the city of John Barbour and of Hector Boece—were honourably upheld by a small knot of poets. Of these the most academic remains the most famous. Poet and professor, philosopher and man of letters, James Beattie was no less distinguished in his time by his "Minstrel" and his prose "Essay on Truth" than by the encouragement and help which he constantly afforded to men of genius less fortunately placed. Not only were Ross and Blacklock substantially indebted to him for the furtherance of their literary fortunes, but constantly in the literary history of the time one comes upon hints and helps given now to one poet and now to another, which again and again bore valuable fruit. Beattie indeed may be said to have been for forty years a gentle and more generous Johnson, at once the literary dictator and the Mæcenas of the far north.

The author of "The Minstrel" was the son of a considerable farmer, and was born at Laurencekirk in the county of Kincardine. After taking his degree at Marischal College in 1753, he was for a time schoolmaster at Fordoun, and became later a teacher in the grammar school of Aberdeen. In 1760 he was chosen Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in his alma mater; and from that time onward his public life was that of the prosperous academic and man of letters.

A year after taking his chair he printed his first volume of poetry, but though it was handsomely received by the critics, it was afterwards suppressed by the author himself. In 1765 he appeared again before the public with a poem "The Judgement of Paris," in which the classic story was made, parablewise, to shadow forth an ethical lesson. His chief prose work was his great "Essay on Truth." This was considered perhaps the most masterly treatise of its day, and a powerful counterblast to the philosophy of Hume, and it brought its author not only a European renown, but no fewer than two invitations from the highest ecclesiastical quarters to accept preferment in the Church

of England. These invitations he of course did not accept, but his society was much sought after, and for some time in 1771 he was lionised in cultivated London society. He was the author also of a work on Christian Evidences, and of another volume of essays.

Beattie's fame, however, at the present day depends almost entirely on his poem "The Minstrel." The first part of the poem, which is also the best, was mostly written in 1768. It appeared in 1770, and the two cantos which comprise the entire work were published together in 1777. The design of "The Minstrel," according to its author's preface, was "to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a *minstrel*." A parallel has been drawn between Beattie's "Minstrel" and Byron's "Childe Harold," both in purpose and style, and there can hardly be any doubt that Byron derived his idea from the elder poet. The "Minstrel," in its difficult Spenserian stanza, remains without doubt its author's most individualistic work, and establishes him as the apostle of classical elegance among Scots poets of his day. Some of his odes, especially that on "Retirement," possess also much beauty and charm, but they are hardly to be distinguished from similar compositions of Gray and Collins.

The last years of the poet, sad to say, were clouded by the darkest of sorrows. His wife, Mary, a daughter of Dr. James Dun, head-master of Aberdeen grammar-school, whom he had married in 1767, became insane. This was an affliction heavy enough in itself, but Beattie was also haunted by apprehensions of a similar fate for his two sons. These, happily, were unrealized, but the elder of the two, a youth of such brilliant promise that he was appointed professor to assist his father at the early age of nineteen, was cut off on the very threshold of his career by another malady, and the younger died not long afterwards. Under his threefold sorrow Beattie gave way to despair; the last three years of his life were passed in hopeless solitude, and under an attack of paralysis he finally succumbed.

In 1806 Beattie's life was written by Sir William Forbes, and in 1810 his complete poems were printed by Chalmers in his colossal edition of the poets. The best modern edition is probably that in the "Aldine Series."

THE MINSTREL.

THE POET'S CHOICE.

Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where fame's proud temple shines afar;
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with fortune an eternal war;
Checked by the scoff of pride, by envy's frown,
And poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
Then dropped into the grave unpitied and unknown!

And yet the languor of inglorious days
Not equally oppressive is to all;
Him who ne'er listened to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appall.
There are who, deaf to mad ambition's call,
Would shrink to bear th' obstreperous trump of fame;
Supremely blessed if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. No higher aim
Had he whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore:
Nor need I here describe, in learned lay,
How forth the minstrel fared in days of yore,
Right glad of heart, though homely in array,
His waving locks and beard all hoary grey;
While from his bending shoulder, decent hung
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
Which to the whistling wind responsive rung:
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor villager inspires my strain.
With thee let pageantry and power abide:
The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign,
Where through wild groves at eve the lonely swain
Enraptured roams, to gaze on Nature's charms.
They hate the sensual, and scorn the vain,
The parasite their influence never warms,
Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms.

Though richest hues the peacock's plumes adorn,
Yet horror screams from his discordant throat.
Rise, sons of harmony, and hail the morn,
While warbling larks on russet pinions float.
Or seek at noon the woodland scene remote,
Where the grey linnets carol from the hill.
O, let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant strain the little bill,
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where they will.

Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand,
Nor was perfection made for man below;
Yet all her schemes with nicest art are planned,
Good counteracting ill, and gladness woe.
With gold and gems if Chilian mountains glow;
If, bleak and barren, Scotia's hills arise;
There plague and poison, lust and rapine grow;
Here peaceful are the vales, and pure the skies,
And freedom fires the soul, and sparkles in the eyes.

Then grieve not, thou to whom th' indulgent Muse
Vouchsafes a portion of celestial fire;
Nor blame the partial Fates, if they refuse
Th' imperial banquet and the rich attire.
Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre.
Wilt thou debase the heart which God refined?
No; let thy heaven-taught soul to Heaven aspire,
To fancy, freedom, harmony resigned;
Ambition's grovelling crew for ever left behind.

Canst thou forego the pure ethereal soul
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of luxury to loll,
Stung with disease, and stupified with spleen;
Fain to implore the aid of flattery's screen,
Even from thyself thy loathsome heart to hide
(The mansion then no more of joy serene),
Where fear, distrust, malevolence abide,
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride?

O, how canst thou renounce the boundless store
  Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!—
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
  The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
  All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
  All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of Heaven—
O, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
  And love, and gentleness, and joy impart.
But these thou must renounce, if lust of wealth
  E'er win its way to thy corrupted heart:
  For, ah! it poisons like a scorpion's dart;
Prompting th' ungenerous wish, the selfish scheme,
  The stern resolve unmoved by pity's smart,
The troublous day, and long distressful dream.
Return, my roving Muse, resume thy purposed theme.

THE POET'S VISION.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
  Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
  Lingering and listening, wandered down the vale.
  There would he dream of graves, and corses pale,
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
  And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering aisles along.

Or when the setting moon, in crimson dyed,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entranced sight.
And first, a wildly murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illumed the vault of night.

Anon in view a portal's blazoned arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold;
And forth a host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-robed minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along. With many-coloured rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze.

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scar'dst the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer, who oft hath reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill!
O, to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let Harmony aye shut her gentle ear.
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear;
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear.

Forbear, my Muse. Let love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
For how should he at wicked chance repine,
Who feels from every changè amusement flow!
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are borne.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?—
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide,
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees; the linnet's lay of love;
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings.
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs;
Slow tolls the village church the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tower.

RETIREMENT.

When in the crimson cloud of even
The lingering light decays,
And Hesper on the front of heaven
His glittering gem displays;
Deep in the silent vale unseen,
Beside a lulling stream,
A pensive youth, of placid mien,
Indulged this tender theme.

"Ye cliffs, in hoary grandeur piled
High o'er the glimmering dale;
Ye woods, along whose windings wild
Murmurs the solemn gale;—
Where Melancholy strays forlorn,
And Woe retires to weep,
What time the wan moon's yellow horn
Gleams on the western deep!

"To you, ye wastes, whose artless charms
Ne'er drew Ambition's eye,
'Scaped a tumultuous world's alarms,
To your retreats I fly:
Deep in your most sequestered bower
Let me at last recline,
Where Solitude, mild, modest power,
Leans on her ivied shrine.

"How shall I woo thee, matchless fair?
Thy heavenly smile how win?—
Thy smile that smooths the brow of care,
And stills the storm within.
O wilt thou to thy favourite grove
Thine ardent votary bring,
And bless his hours, and bid them move
Serene, on silent wing?

"Oft let remembrance soothe his mind
With dreams of former days.
When, in the lap of peace reclined,
He framed his infant lays;—
When fancy raved at large, nor care,
Nor cold distrust alarmed;
Nor envy, with malignant glare,
This simple youth had harmed.

"'Twas then, O Solitude! to thee
His early vows were paid,
From heart sincere and warm and free,
Devoted to the shade.
Ah, why did fate his steps decoy
In stormy paths to roam,
Remote from all congenial joy?—
O take the wanderer home!

"Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream,

Whence the scared owl on pinions grey
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

"O! while to thee the woodland pours
Its wildly warbling song,
And balmy from the banks of flowers
The zephyr breathes along,
Let no rude sound invade from far,
No vagrant foot be nigh,
No ray from Grandeur's gilded car
Flash on the startled eye.

"But if some pilgrim through the glade
Thy hallowed bowers explore,
O guard from harm his hoary head,
And listen to his lore.
For he of joys divine shall tell,
That wean from earthly woe,
And triumph o'er the mighty spell
That chains this heart below.

"For me no more the path invites
Ambition loves to tread;
No more I climb those toilsome heights,
By guileful hope misled.
Leaps my fond fluttering heart no more
To mirth's enlivening strain;
For present pleasure soon is o'er,
And all the past is vain."

ALEXANDER GEDDES.

1737-1802.

For some time during the Rebellion of 1745 the fortunes of the north and of the Jacobite cause seemed to depend upon the part taken by Lord Lewis Gordon, third son of the Duke of Gordon. That young man declared for Charles Edward, raised his father's tenants, and marched to the support of the Chevalier. On the overthrow of the clans he was attainted, but, escaping to France, survived till the year 1754. At the present day he lives in popular memory chiefly by means of the song, "Lewie Gordon."

The author of this composition was Alexander Geddes. The son of a small farmer at Arradowl in Banffshire, Geddes, after a distinguished career at the University of Paris, became a priest of the Roman Church. For a time he filled the position of chaplain in the family of the sixth Earl of Traquair. While in that situation he is said to have loved and been loved by one of the daughters of the earl. He kept, however, to the laws of honour and to his vows, and leaving behind him a "beautiful but confidential little poem," *The Confessional*, retired for a time to France. A little later he was settled as priest at Auchinhalrig in his native county, where, besides his priestly duties and the management of a farm, he devoted himself to scholarship and literature, publishing in 1779 a set of satires adapted from Horace, for which he received the sum of one hundred pounds. His liberal opinions, and in particular his attendance at a protestant place of worship, brought upon him the censure of his church, and he was at last deposed by his bishop. The University of Aberdeen, however, marked his worth by the degree of Doctor of Laws. In 1781, while revisiting Traquair, he wrote his "Linton, a Tweed Pastoral," in honour of the birth of an heir to Lord Traquair. He finally settled in London, where he was pensioned by Lord Petre, and became known as the author of a number of political and polemical treatises, and of polemical and elegiac poems. His great work, a new English translation of the Bible for Catholics, was published in part in two volumes in 1792. The most finished of his English poems

is his "Battle of Bangor." This comic-heroic poem of nine cantos is modelled on Pope's "Rape of the Lock," or rather the Lutrin of Despreaux, and celebrates with spirit a notorious disturbance of the time, the attempt of Dr. Warren, Bishop of the diocese, to turn out Grindlay, the deputy-registrar, from his office and abode by force of arms. Geddes also wrote and published "A Norfolk Tale," a poetical account of a walking excursion from London to Norwich. But his popular fame depends on his song. Besides "Lewie Gordon," a humorous lyric, "The Wee Wifukie," has frequently been attributed to him; but there are strong reasons for believing it to be the work of Alexander Watson of Aberdeen.

In 1803, a year after Geddes's death, a memoir of him was published by John Mason Good. He is also the subject of an article in Irving's "Lives of the Scottish Poets."

LEWIE GORDON.

O SEND Lewie Gordon hame,
And the lad I daurna name! *
Though his back be at the wa',
Here's to him that's far awa'.
Ohone! my Highlandman;
Oh! my bonnie Highlandman!
Weel wad I my true love ken
Amang ten thousand Highlandmen.

Oh! to see his tartan trews,
Bonnet blue, and laigh-heeled shoes,
Philabeg abune his knee!—
That's the lad that I'll gang wi'.
Ohone! my Highlandman.

* Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

Princely youth of whom I sing,
Thou wert born to be a king!
On thy breast a regal star
Shines on loyal hearts afar.
Ohone! my Highlandman.

Oh! to see the wished-for one
Seated on a kingly throne!
All our griefs would disappear,
We should hail a joyful year.
Ohone! my Highlandman.

THE BATTLE OF BANGOR.

OPENING VERSES.

THE peerless Prelate who with well-aimed thrust
Laid a presumptuous layman in the dust,
Chased from the precincts of the sacred fane
A Registrar, rebellious, rash, and vain,
Who dared 'gainst Heaven uplift his lawless rod,
And bid defiance to the sons of God,
I sing. Be present, Muse of Despreaux!
And make my numbers like his numbers flow.
Or rather, still more powerful succours bring—
A greater hero, mightier deeds I sing.
And thou, sweet nymph of a more noble stock,
Who taught our bard to sing Belinda's lock,
Vouchsafe on these more humble strains to smile,
And let them live—at least a little while.

THE COURT OF ZEALOTISM.

'Mong the celestial goddesses above,
That grace the mansions of almighty Jove,
A nymph there is, whose province is to raise
In man's cold heart devotion's melting blaze;

For oft, too oft, forgetful of his God,
Poor earthly man betrays his native clod.
Her name is Zeala—through the world she flies,
Love in her looks, and ardour in her eyes;
Nor can the iciest mortal well withstand
The glowing touch of her enchanting hand.
Yet, neither stiff nor stern, she gently bends
Her willing votaries to her purposed ends.
Martyrs she makes, but martyrs meek and mild,
Who ne'er revile, although they be reviled.
In virtue's cause a vigour she inspires,
But never kindles persecution's fires.
Once on a time, as this celestial maid,
In quest of converts, through Tholosa strayed;
There in a convent, horrible to tell!
A lecherous friar compressed her in his cell.
From this commixtion a dire demon came,
And Zealotismus is that demon's name.
Rapid his growth, for his half-heavenly birth
Gave him advantage o'er the sons of earth.
Fostered by popes and kings, behold him rise
In a short space to an enormous size!
His fame by strolling priests is blazed abroad;
And men mistake him for a demi-god.
Whole nations eagerly embrace his laws;
But chief, Iberia's sons support his cause.
There temples, there to him were altars reared;
With human blood those altars were besmeared:
Religion sanctioned the devouring flame,
And infants trembled at this Moloch's name.
Thus erst; but now he sees his power decline.

No bloody trophies more bedeck his shrine;
No fiery *San Benitos* more adorn
The Moor or Jew, condemned to public scorn.
Yet, yet a week of years, the world shall see
His throne o'erturned, and fair Iberia free.

Yet still on Tajo's banks he holds his court,
Thither the zealots of the West resort;
A hooded band, th' emissaries of Rome,
Support his empire, and surround his dome.

In the first porch of this stupendous place
Stands Persecution, with an iron face.
In his right hand a scorpion scourge he bears,
Betinged with human blood and human tears;
And in his left he grasps a band of fire
Ready to light the dread funereal pyre.
Cut deep in stone above the monster's head,
ΕΙΔΕ ΚΑΙ ΦΟΒΟΥ clearly may be read.

In the remotest part of this abode
Is the apartment of the grisly god.
There Phœbus never shows his cheerful face;
Tapers of yellow wax supply his place,
Such as at dismal dirges are displayed
To half-illuminate the half-damned dead.
High on a throne of rough and rusty steel
Sedately sits the spurious son of Zeal.

Dame Superstition, his beloved bride,
Sits, like another Thais, by his side.
Pale is her visage, peevish is her mien,
For she is often troubled with the spleen.
Her weeds are black, but with a copious store
Of gaudy trinkets they are tinselled o'er—

Beads from Loretto, Agnus Dei's from Rome,
And christened relics from a catacomb;
Crosses and medals with indulgence fraught,
And images that miracles have wrought.
Like that which lately, at Ancona, drew
Just adoration from the Turk and Jew.
Behind his throne, to catch his dire commands,
His armour-bearer, Fanatismus, stands.
Screws, racks, and pulleys, sulphur, pitch, and tar,
With other implements of holy war,
Lie piled around him, all in order fair,
As in the Tower our guns and pistols are.

ADDRESS BEFORE THE FIGHT.

"Servants of the Lord!
Deans, doctors, priests, and levites, hear my word—
His castle must be stormed, himself extruded:
Such is my will." He said, and so concluded.
Mute for a while his myrmidons remain:
What priest in storming castles would be fain?
Besides, small hopes of sure success they saw:
They had no cannon, save the canon-law;
Nor battering-engine, save the hand and head:
That was not iron, and this was not lead,
And well they knew that gates of solid oak
Are not by common engines to be broke.
Perplexed they stand; yet how refuse to fight,
Under a bishop, for the church's right?
They bow assent, yet in their looks appear
Some outward symptoms of an inward fear.

The Prelate saw the cause, and smiling said,
"Our plan of war at dinner shall be laid.
An empty stomach lacks its usual power:
Retire, reflect, and come again at four.
A turtle waits you, and a haunch of doe—
That comes from Liverpool, and this from Stowe—
With store of wine; I hope you will not spare it;
For I have just laid in a pipe of claret."

As when the sun with his impressive ray
Dispels the fogs of a November day,
The sullen skies their wonted face assume,
And seem but brighter from the previous gloom;
So now the Bishop's powerful words replace
Joy in each heart, and blood in every face.
They thank his Lordship with a joint accord,
And pledge themselves to join the festal board.

JAMES MACPHERSON.

1738-1796.

Ossian Macpherson, as he was called, after a literary habit of his time, was the son of a farmer, was born at Kingussie in the ancient Highland district of Badenoch, and was educated for the kirk at the universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh. While he was still a youth, several poetical compositions from his pen appeared in the *Scots Magazine*, and at the age of twenty he published an epic in six cantos, entitled "The Highlander." Among his other efforts the most conspicuous was an ode on the arrival of the Earl Marischal in Scotland. His introduction to general notice, however, was effected, not in the character of author, but of translator. While travelling as tutor to Mr. Graham the younger of Balgowan, in the summer of 1759, he met, on the bowling-green at Moffat, the Rev. John Home, author of "Douglas." In his possession at the time he had some transcripts of Gaelic poetry which he had taken down from the recitation of old people in his native district. These remains excited at once the interest and the admiration of Home, and, obtaining translations of a few of them from Macpherson, he sent them to Dr. Hugh Blair, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh University. Blair at once pressed Macpherson for translations of the remaining pieces in his possession, a request with which, after some demur, the young tutor complied; and as a result Blair published at Edinburgh, in 1760, a small volume, entitled *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language.* This small volume excited an immediate and intense interest in the northern capital, and presently Macpherson was commissioned to make a tour through the Highlands for the purpose of collecting and preserving further remains of Gaelic poetry. His enterprise enlisted the interest of many Highland gentlemen, chiefs, and sennachies, who gave him ancient MSS. in their possession. Mr. Gallie, afterwards minister in Badenoch, and Mr. Macpherson of Strathmashie, gave him their assistance in the interpretation of obsolete words. And in 1762, having removed to London, Macpherson published, under the patronage of Lord Bute, two volumes of literal prose translations, entitled

Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem, in six books, with other lesser poems. This he followed in the next year with *Temora, an Epic Poem, in eight books, with other poems.*

Of the tremendous literary controversy to which these publications at once gave rise, it is impossible here to give an account. They were published at a time when, owing to the recent terrors of the Raid to Derby, everything Scottish was anathema in the metropolis, and when Dr. Johnson, with his violent anti-Scottish prejudices, reigned supreme in the coffee-houses. Further, they appeared under the patronage of the head of an unpopular administration. But for these circumstances there would probably have been no uproar, and but for Macpherson's false self-pride the uproar might have been immediately silenced. Both sides, however, appear to have lost temper, and the result was confusion. The final judgment of experts on the subject, backed by the evidence of more recent collections of poetry made in the Highlands, appears to be that Macpherson's translations are in the main authentic, though liberties may have been taken here and there in matters of detail.

The poems of Ossian, as they were called, were immediately translated into every continental language, and the reputation of Macpherson may be said to have become European. The rest of his career was that of the prosperous man of letters of his time. In 1764 he went out to Pensacola as private secretary to the Governor. A difference, however, arising, he gave up the position, made a tour through the West India Islands, and returned to London in 1766 with a pension of £200 a year. In 1771 he published a volume of Gaelic antiquities under the title of *An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, and two years later, in the style of his Ossian, a somewhat hasty translation of Homer's Iliad. Both of these were attacked with much virulence, and regarding the latter, Johnson remarked that "Macpherson's abilities, since his Homer, are not so formidable." For his *History of Great Britain, from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover*, with its companion volumes of *Original Papers*, he is said to have received the sum of £3000. Government also employed him to write two pamphlets in defence of their action in the dispute and rupture with America. And on being appointed agent in Britain for the Nabob of Arcot, he was provided with a seat in Parliament. Failing at last in health, he retired to Belleville, a mansion he had built in his native district on Speyside, and there he died in February, 1796. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

THE

EARL MARISCHAL'S WELCOME TO HIS NATIVE COUNTRY.*

'Twas when the full-eared harvest bowed
  Beneath the merry reaper's hand;
When here the plenteous sheaves were strewed,
  And there the corns nod o'er the land;
When on each side the loadened ground,
Breathing her ripened scents, the joval season
    crowned;
The villagers, all on the green,
  Th' arrival of their lord attend;
The blithesome shepherds haste to join,
  And whistling from the hills descend;
Nor orphan nor lone widow mourns;
  Ev'n hopeless lovers lose their pains;
To-day their banished lord returns,
  Once more to bless his native plains.

* George, 10th Earl Marischal of Scotland, Lord Keith and Altre, forfeited after the Rebellion of 1715, became Governor-general to the King of Prussia of the principalities of Neufchatel and Vallenguin. An Act of Parliament was passed to enable him to inherit the estate of John, Earl of Kintore, of whom he was heir, in 1762.

Each hoary sire, with gladdened face,
Repeats some ancient tale,
How he with Tyrcis at the chase
Hied o'er the hill and dale.
Their hoary heads with rapture glow,
While each to each repeats
How well he knew where to bestow,
Was to oppression still a foe;
Still mixing with their praise his youthful feats.

Then from the grass Melanthus rose,
The arbitrator of the plains,
And silent all stood fixed to hear
The Tityrus of Mernia's swains.
For with the Muse's fire his bosom glowed,
And easy from his lips the numbers flowed.

"Now the wished-for day is come,
Our lord reviews his native home;
Now clear and strong ideas rise,
And wrap my soul in ecstasies.
Methinks I see that ruddy morn
When, wakened by the hunter's horn,
I rose, and by yon mountain's side,
Saw Tyrcis and Achates ride,
While, floating by yon craggy brow,
The slowly scatt'ring mist withdrew.
I saw the roebuck cross yon plain,
Yon heathy steep I saw him gain;
The hunters still fly o'er the ground,
Their shouts the distant hills resound.

Dunnottar's towers resound the peal
That echoes o'er the hill and dale.
At length, what time the ploughman leads
Home from the field his weary steeds,
At yon old tree the roebuck fell:
The huntsmen's jocund mingled shouts his downfall
tell.

"The mem'ry of those happy days
Still in my breast must transport raise—
Those happy days, when oft were seen
The brothers marching o'er the green
With dog and gun, while yet the night
Was blended with the dawning light,
When first the sheep begin to bleat,
And th' early kine rise from their dewy seat."

Thus as he spoke, each youthful breast
Glows with wild ecstasies:
In each eye rapture stands confessed;
Each thinks he flies along the mead,
And manages the fiery steed,
And hears the beagles' cries.
The sage Melanthus now again
Stretched forth his hand, and thus resumed the
strain.

"Now my youthful heat returns,
My breast with youthful vigour burns.
Methinks I see that glorious day
When, to hunt the fallow-deer,

Three thousand marched in grand array,
Three thousand marched with bow and spear,
All in the light and healthy dress
Our brave forefathers wore
In Kenneth's wars and Bruce's days,
And when the Romans fled their dreadful wrath
of yore.

"O'er every hill, o'er every dale,
All by the winding banks of Tay,
Resounds the hunter's cheerful peal;
Their armour glittered to the day."

Big with his joys of youth the old man stood.
Dunnottar's ruined towers then caught his eye;
He stopped and hung his head in pensive mood,
And from his bosom burst the unbidden sigh.
Then turning, with a warrior look,
Shaking his hoary curls the old man spoke.

"Virtue, O Fortune! scorns thy power;
Thou canst not bind her for an hour!
Virtue shall ever shine;
And endless praise, her glorious dower,
Shall bless her sons divine.
The kings of th' earth, with open arms,
Th' illustrious exiles * hail.
See warlike Cyrus,† great and wise,
Demand and follow their advice,
And all his breast unveil.

* The Earl Marischal and his brother James, one of the most distinguished generals of the age.

† Frederick, King of Prussia.

"See, pouring from their hills of snow,
Nations of savages in arms!
A desert lies where'er they go,
Before them march pale terror and alarms.
The princes of the south prepare
Their thousand thousands for the war.
Against thee, Cyrus, they combine;
The north and south their forces join
To crush thee in the dust.
But thou art safe; Achates * draws
His sword with thine, and backs thy cause:
Yes, thou art doubly safe, thy cause is just.

"With dread the Turks have oft beheld
His sword wide waving o'er the field,
As oft these sons of carnage fled
O'er mountains of their kindred dead.

"When all the fury of the fight
With wrath redoubled raged,
When man to man, with giant might,
For all that's dear engaged,
When all was thunder, smoke, and fire,
When from their native rocks the frighted springs
retire,
'Twas then, through streams of smoke and blood,
Achates mounts the city wall;
Though wounded, like a god he stood,
And at his feet the foes submissive fall. †

* Marshal James Keith.

† Marshall Keith twice in person repelled fierce sorties from the besieged city of Prague.

"Brave are the Goths, and fierce in fight,
Yet these he gave to rout and flight;
Proud when they were of victory,
He rushed on like a storm; dispersed and weak
they fly.
Thus from the Grampians old
A torrent deep and strong
Down rushes on the fold,
And sweeps the shepherd and the flock along.

"When, through an aged wood,
The thunder roars amain,
His paths with oaks are strewed,
And ruin marks the plain;
So many a German field can tell
How in his path the mighty heroes fell.

"When with their numerous dogs the swains
Surprise the aged lion's den,
Th' old warrior rushes to the charge,
And scorns the rage of dogs and men;
His whelps he guards on every side;
Safe they retreat. What though a mortal dart
Stands trembling in his breast, his dauntless heart
Glows with a victor's pride.

"So the old lion, brave Achates, fought,
And miracles of prowess wrought;
With a few pickets bore the force
Of eighty thousand—stopped their course,
Till off his friends had marched, and all was well.

Even he himself could ne'er do more,
Fate had no greater deed in store—
When all his host was safe the godlike hero fell."*

Thus as he spoke, each hoary sire
Fights o'er again his ancient wars,
Each youth burns with a hero's fire,
And triumphs in his future scars.
O'er bloody fields each thinks he rides,
The thunder of the battle guides,
(Beneath his lifted arm, struck pale,
The foes for mercy cry),
And hears applauding legions hail
Him with the shouts of victory.

* Marshal Keith, after serving with the highest distinction in the armies of Spain, Russia, and Prussia, fell, after repulsing a night attack of the Austrians on the camp of Frederick between Bautzen and Hochkirk, October 14, 1758. See a pamphlet, *A Discourse on the Death of Marshal Keith, read before the Royal Academy of Science at Berlin.* Edin. 1764.

JAMES MUIRHEAD.

1740-1808.

The author of "Bess the Gawkie," an outstanding specimen of the Scottish pastoral muse which has "Robene and Makyne" for its earliest example and "The Gentle Shepherd" for its chief performance, was a native of the parish of Buittle, and became minister of the parish of Urr in Galloway. He was a distinguished scholar, naturalist, and mathematician. As laird of the estate of Logan, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, he was lampooned in an election ballad of Burns, and retorted with a free translation of one of Martial's epigrams, which his assailant is said to have felt very keenly. "Bess the Gawkie" appeared in Herd's Collection in 1776, and Dr. Muirhead died in 1808 at the age of 68.

BESS THE GAWKIE.

Blythe young Bess to Jean did say,
"Will ye gang to yon sunny brae,
Where flocks do feed and herds do stray,
And sport awhile wi' Jamie?"
"Ah, na, lass! I'll no gang there,
Nor about Jamie tak' a care,
Nor about Jamie tak' a care,
For he's ta'en up wi' Maggie."

"For hark and I will tell you, lass,
Did I not see young Jamie pass,
Wi' meikle blytheness in his face,
Out owre the muir to Maggie?

I wat he gae her mony a kiss,
And Maggie took them nae amiss,
'Twixt ilka smack pleased her wi' this,
That Bess was but a gawkie[1].

[1] idle fool.

"'For when a civil kiss I seek,
She turns her head, and thraws her cheek,
And for an hour she'll hardly speak;
Wha'd no ca' her a gawkie?
But sure my Maggie has mair sense;
She'll gi'e a score without offence:
Now gi'e me ane into the mense[2],
And ye sall be my dawtie[3].'"

[2] with decorum.

[3] darling.

"'O, Jamie, ye ha'e mony ta'en,
But I will never stand for ane,
Or twa when we do meet again;
So ne'er think me a gawkie!'
'Ah na, lass, that canna be;
Sic thochts as thae are far frae me,
Or ony thy sweet face that see,
E'er to think thee a gawkie.'

"But whisht! nae mair o' this we'll speak,
For yonder Jamie does us meet:
Instead o' Meg he kissed so sweet,
I trow he likes his gawkie."
"O, dear Bess, I hardly knew,
When I cam' by, your gown sae new.
I think you've got it weet wi' dew."
Quo' she, "That's like a gawkie.

"It's weet wi' dew, and will get rain;
And I'll get gowns when it is gane;
Sae ye may gang the gate ye cam',
And tell it to your dawtie."
The guilt appeared in Jamie's cheek:
He cried, "O cruel maid, but sweet,
If I could gang anither gate,
I ne'er could meet my dawtie."

The lasses fast frae him they flew,
And left poor Jamie sair to rue
That ever Maggie's face he knew,
Or yet ca'ed Bess a gawkie.
As they gaed owre the muir they sang,
The hills and dales wi' echo rang,
The hills and dales wi' echo rang,
"Gang owre the muir to Maggie!"

JOHN EWEN.

1741-1821.

A native of Montrose, and the son, it is said, of a tinker, John Ewen himself for a time followed the trade of a packman. In 1760 he settled in Aberdeen as a hardware merchant, and so improved his fortune by industry and marriage that at his death he left a fortune of £15,000. An obituary in the *Scots Magazine* of the time paid a highly flattering tribute to his usefulness, respectability, and intelligence, and praised him especially for his exertions in favour of charitable institutions as well as in cases of private distress. Yet, because his daughter and only child had married otherwise than he desired, he left his entire fortune to found a college for orphans. After much litigation, in which the character of Ewen came out in rather unenviable light, the will was set aside by the House of Lords, the reason assigned being the testator's lack of precision in stating both the amount to be expended on the hospital, and the number of poor boys to be benefited.

In the light of such a revelation it is little to be wondered at that the authenticity of Ewen's only song, that "exquisite, artless embodiment of the affection of the mother and the wife," "The Boatie Rows," should be challenged by Buchan, the ballad collector. The latter, however, altogether failed to make out a case, Ewen indeed having been well known in Aberdeen as a man of musical talent and lyric taste; and the song remains accordingly an outstanding evidence of the frequent paradox of human nature. "The Boatie Rows" was first assigned to John Ewen by Burns, who stated it to be, in his opinion, "nearly equal to 'There's nae Luck about the House.'"

THE BOATIE ROWS.

O WEEL may the boatie row,
And better may it speed;
And liesome[1] may the boatie row
That wins the bairnies' bread!

[1] pleasant.

The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel;
And meikle luck attend the boat,
The murlain[1] and the creel!

[1] half-peck wooden measure.

I cuist my line in Largo Bay,
And fishes I caught nine;
There's three to boil, and three to fry,
And three to bait the line.
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed;
And weel may the boatie row
That wins my bairnies' bread.

O weel may the boatie row
That fills a heavy creel,
And cleeds us a' frae tap to tae,
And buys our parritch meal!
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed,
And happy be the lot of a'
That wish the boatie speed!

When Jamie vowed he wad be mine,
And won frae me my heart,
O meikle lighter grew my creel;
He swore we'd never part.
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel;
And meikle lighter is the load
When love bears up the creel.

My kertch I put upon my head,
And dressed mysel' fu' braw;
But dowie, dowie was my heart
When Jamie gaed awa'.
But weel may the boatie row,
And lucky be her part;
And lightsome be the lassie's care,
That yields an honest heart!

When Sandy, Jock, and Janetie,
Are up, and gotten lear[1],
They'll help to gar the boatie row,
And lighten a' our care.
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel;
And lightsome be her heart that bears
The murlain and the creel!

[1] learning.

When we are auld, and sair bowed down,
And hirplin'[2] at the door,
They'll row to keep us dry and warm,
As we did them before.
Then weel may the boatie row,
And better may it speed,
And happy be the lot of a'
That wish the boatie speed!

[2] hobbling.

ISOBEL PAGAN.

1741-1821.

Ill-favoured and deformed in person, Isobel or Tibbie Pagan was no less famed for her sarcastic wit than for her vocal powers. Her hovel, near Muirkirk, in Ayrshire, where most of her dissolute days were spent, and where she died, was a favourite houf of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who, while they enjoyed her smuggled whiskey, made merry over her shafts of humour and wit, and took pleasure in hearing her sing. Though so near a neighbour, Burns curiously was not aware that she was the author of "Ca' the yowes to the knowes," which he stated in his notes to Johnson's *Museum* to be "in the true Scottish taste." Possibly he did not even know of her existence. About the year 1805 there was published at Glasgow under her name "A Collection of Songs and Poems," most of them little more than doggerel. An account of her irregular and eccentric life, with one or two of her compositions, is given in "The Ayrshire Contemporaries of Burns," Edin. 1840.

Of her fine song as here printed, the final verse is from the pen of Burns himself. Another set of words with the same title was also written by Burns.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.

[1] Drive the ewes.

Ca' the yowes[1] to the knowes—
Ca' them whare the heather grows—
Ca' them whare the burnie rows,
My bonnie dearie!

As I gaed doun the water side,
There I met my shepherd lad;
He rowed me sweetly in his plaid,
And ca'd me his dearie.

"Will ye gang doun the water side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide
Beneath the hazels spreading wide?
The mune it shines fu' clearly."

"I was bred up at nae sic schule,
My shepherd lad, to play the fule,
And a' the day to sit in dule[1],
And naebody to see me."

[1] sadness.

"Ye shall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cawf-leather shoon to thy white feet,
And in my arms ye'se lie and sleep,
And ye shall be my dearie."

"If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
I'se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad;
And ye may row me in your plaid,
And I shall be your dearie."

"While waters wimple[2] to the sea—
While day blinks[3] i' the lift[4] sae hie—
Till clay-cauld death shall blin[5] my e'e
Ye aye shall be my dearie!"

[2] meander, ripple.
[3] shines.
[4] heaven.
[5] close.

THE CROOK AND PLAID.*

Ilk lassie has a laddie she lo'es abune the rest,
Ilk lassie has a laddie, if she like to confess 't,
That is dear unto her bosom, whatever be his trade;
But my lover's aye the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

Ilk morn he climbs the mountains, his fleecy flocks to view,
And hears the laverocks[1] chanting, new sprung frae 'mang the dew;
His bonnie wee bit doggie, sae frolicsome and glad,
Rins aye before the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

[1] larks.

And when that he is wearied, and lies upon the grass,
What if that in his plaidie he hide a bonnie lass?—
Nae doubt there's a preference due to every trade,
But commend me to the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

* Of several more recent versions of this song, one was written by the Rev. Henry S. Riddell, and another has been "adapted and arranged" by Mr. Hamilton Nimmo.

And when in summer weather he is upon the hill,
He reads in books of history that learns him meikle skill;
There's nae sic joyous leisure to be had at ony trade
Save that the laddie follows that wears the crook and plaid.

What though in storms o' winter part o' his flock should die,
My laddie is aye cheery, and why should not I?
The prospect o' the summer can weel mak' us glad;
Contented is the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

King David was a shepherd while in the prime o' youth,
And following the flocks he pondered upon truth;
And when he came to be a king, and left his former trade,
'Twas an honour to the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

MRS. HUNTER.

1742-1821.

Anne, the wife of the celebrated surgeon, John Hunter, was the eldest daughter of Robert Home of Greenlaw in Berwickshire. As the sister of Sir Everard Home, and wife of perhaps the most eminent surgeon of his time, Mrs. Hunter entertained some of the most intellectual society of the day. From an early age she had written verse, but it was not till 1802 that she collected her writings. On the appearance of her volume it was somewhat unmercifully treated by Jeffrey. Her songs, however, were set to music by Haydn, and at least one of them remains justly popular to the present day.

MY MOTHER BIDS ME BIND MY HAIR.

My mother bids me bind my hair
With bands of rosy hue,
Tie up my sleeves with ribbons rare,
And lace my boddice blue.

"For why," she cries, "sit still and weep,
While others dance and play?"
Alas! I scarce can go or creep
While Lubin is away.

'Tis sad to think the days are gone
When those we love were near;
I sit upon this mossy stone
And sigh when none can hear.

And while I spin my flaxen thread,
And sing my simple lay,
The village seems asleep or dead,
Now Lubin is away.

TO-MORROW.

How heavy falls the foot of Time!
How slow the lingering quarters chime,
  Through anxious hours of long delay!
In vain we watch the silent glass,
More slow the sands appear to pass,
  While disappointment marks their way.

To-morrow!—still the phantom flies,
Flitting away before our eyes,
  Eludes our grasp, is past and gone.
Daughter of hope, night o'er thee flings
The shadow of her raven wings,
  And in the morning thou art flown!

Delusive sprite! from day to day
We still pursue thy pathless way:
  Thy promise, broken o'er and o'er,
Man still believes and is thy slave;
Nor ends the chase but in the grave,
  For there to-morrow is no more.

ALEXANDER,
DUKE OF GORDON.

1743-1827.

No fewer than five versions exist of the old song known as "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen." Two of these, anonymous, appear respectively in Herd's "Collection" and in Dale's "Scottish Songs." A third was written by William Reid, the Glasgow bookseller and poet, and a fourth by Lady Nairne. But the best of the five is that by the fourth Duke of Gordon. Famous chiefly as the patron of Robert Burns and the husband of "the witty Duchess of Gordon," the representative of the ancient house of Gordon and Huntly was reputed in his day one of the handsomest young men in Britain, and was estimated by Lord Kames as the greatest subject of the Crown. He was much given to rural sports, and at his own expense he raised two Highland regiments for the King. Latterly he became bitterly estranged from the Duchess Jane, and in 1820 married the lady who had supplanted her in his affections. He has shown himself by his single composition no mean adept in spirited native verse. The song is believed to have been a satire on an aged nobleman who had sought unsuccessfully to woo a young lass. It was first printed in Johnson's *Museum*.

CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.

THERE'S cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And castocks[1] in Stra'bogie;
Gin I ha'e but a bonnie lass,
Ye're welcome to your cogie[2].

[1] stocks of kail or cabbage.

[2] wooden bowl.

And ye may sit up a' the night,
And drink till it be braid daylight;
Gi'e me a lass baith clean and tight
To dance the reel o' Bogie.

In cotillons the French excell;
John Bull loves country dances;
The Spaniards dance fandangoes well;
Mynheer an allemande prances;
In foursome reels the Scots delight,
At threesomes they dance wondrous light,
But twasomes ding[1] a' out o' sight,
Danced to the reel o' Bogie.

[1] drive, beat.

Come lads, and view your partners weel;
Wale[2] each a blithesome rogie;
I'll tak' this lassie to mysel',
She looks sae keen and vogie[3].
Now, piper lads, bang[4] up the spring,
The country fashion is the thing,
To pree[5] their mou's ere we begin
To dance the reel o' Bogie.

[2] choose.

[3] merry, *lit.* vain.

[4] beat.

[5] taste, try.

Now ilka lad has got a lass,
Save yon auld doited fogey,
And ta'en a fling upon the grass,
As they do in Stra'bogie.
But a' the lasses look sae fain,
We canna think oursel's to hain[6],
For they maun ha'e their come again,
To dance the reel o' Bogie.

[6] save.

Now a' the lads ha'e done their best,
  Like true men o' Stra'bogie;
We'll stop a while, and tak' a rest,
  And tipple out a cogie.
Come now, my lads, and tak' your glass,
And try ilk ither to surpass,
In wishing health to every lass
  To dance the reel o' Bogie.

ALEXANDER WATSON.

1744-1831.

An honest tailor of Aberdeen, who "made the first pair o' breeks" for Lord Byron, and thought himself entitled for that performance to some mention in Moore's life of the poet, Deacon Watson remains famous by means of two spirited compositions. During the American war, it is said, an English regiment, stationed in Aberdeen, rather frequently played "The Roast Beef of Old England." The performance irritated Watson, who, by way of counterblast to the English ditty, produced "The Kail Brose of Auld Scotland," a song which for its spirit, if not for its poetry, has always remained popular. His second piece, "The Wee Wifukie," has been attributed to Alexander Geddes and others; but on the personal evidence of the writer of Watson's obituary notice in the *Aberdeen Observer*, the piece must, it would appear, be given to the tailor poet. Intrinsically the song follows much more closely the temper and humour of Watson than the vein of the author of "Lewie Gordon." An account of Watson's productions is given in Walker's *Bards of Bon-Accord*.

THE WEE WIFUKIE.

THERE was a wee bit wifukie was comin' frae the fair,
Had got a wee bit drappukie that bred her meikle care;
It gaed about the wifie's heart, and she began to spue;
"Oh!" quo' the wee wifukie, "I wish I binna fu'!
I wish I binna fu'" quo she, "I wish I binna fu'!
Oh!" quo' the wee wifukie, "I wish I binna fu'!

"If Johnnie find me barley-sick, I'm sure he'll claw
my skin;
But I'll lie down and tak' a nap before that I gae in."
Sitting at the dykeside, and taking o' her nap,
By came a packman laddie wi' a little pack.
"Wi' a little pack," quo' she, "wi' a little pack.
By came a packman laddie wi' a little pack."

He's clippit a' her gowden locks, sae bonnie and
sae lang;
He's ta'en her purse and a' her placks, and fast
awa' he ran,
And when the wife awakened her head was like a
bee.
"Oh!" quo' the wee wifukie, "this is nae me!
This is nae me," quo' she, "this is nae me:
Somebody has been felling me, and this is nae
me.

"I met wi' kindly company, and birled my bawbee,
And still, if this be Bessukie, three placks remain
wi' me;
But I will look the pursie nooks, see gin the cunzie[11] coin.
be.
There's neither purse nor plack about me!—this is
nae me.
This is nae me," quo' she, "this is nae me.
There's neither purse nor plack about me!—
this is nae me.

"I have a little housukie, but and a kindly man;
A dog, they ca' him Doussikie; if this be me he'll fawn;
And Johnnie he'll come to the door, and kindly welcome gi'e;
And a' the bairns on the floor-head will dance if this be me.
This is nae me," quo' she, "this is nae me;
But a' the bairns on the floor-head will dance if this be me."

[1] beat, drove.

The night was late and dang[1] out weet, and oh, but it was dark!
The doggie heard a body's foot, and he began to bark;
O when she heard the doggie bark, and kennin' it was he,
"O weel ken ye, Doussie," quo' she, "this is nae me.
This is nae me," quo' she, "this is nae me!
Weel ken ye, Doussie," quo' she, "this is nae me."

When Johnnie heard his Bessie's word, fast to the door he ran.
"Is that you, Bessukie?" "Wow na, man!
Be kind to the bairns a', and weel mat ye be;
And fareweel, Johnnie," quo' she, "this is nae me.
This is nae me," quo' she, "this is nae me;
Fareweel, Johnnie," quo' she, "this is nae me!"

Johnnie ran to the minister, his hair stood a' on end;
"I've gotten sic a fricht, sir, I fear I'll never mend.
My wife's come hame without a head, crying out maist piteously—
'O fareweel, Johnnie,' quo' she, 'this is nae me!
This is nae me', quo' she, 'this is nae me!
Fareweel, Johnnie,' quo' she, 'this is nae me!'"

"The tale you tell," the parson said, "is wonderful to me,
How that a wife without a head could speak, or hear, or see!
But things that happen hereabout so strangely altered be,
That I could maist, wi' Bessie, say, 'tis neither you nor she,
Neither you nor she," quo' he, "neither you nor she;
Wow, na, Johnnie man, 'tis neither you nor she!"

Now Johnnie he cam' hame again, and oh! but he was fain
To see his little Bessukie come to hersel' again.
He got her sitting on a stool, wi' Tibbuck on her knee;
"Oh! come awa', Johnnie!" quo' she, "come awa' to me!
This is now me," quo' she, "this is now me!
I've got a nap wi' Tibbuckie, and this is now me."

THE

KAIL BROSE OF SCOTLAND.

[1] grandsires. [2] traffic, bargain.

When our gutchers[1] of auld made a troke[2] wi' the laird
For a wee bit o' grund to be a kailyaird,
It was to the brose that they had a regard.
Oh, the kail brose of auld Scotland,
And oh, the Scottish kail brose!

When their leal-hearted youngsters were roused frae repose,
Their frien's to defend, or to conquer their foes,
They proved wi' a vengeance what pith there's in brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

When Wallace and Bruce turned the chase on their foes,
They saired[3] them o' fighting wi' very few blows,
The bauldest cried out, "Let us turn: they've got brose!"
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

[3] served.

Then our sodgers were steel frae the heel to the nose,
Wi' the plaid and the kilt, the claymore, and the hose,
And the bag o' oatmeal at their backs to be brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

At our annual elections for baillies or mayor,
Nae kickshaws o' puddin's or tarts were seen there;
But a dish o' gude brose was the favourite fare.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

There was hotch-potch and haggis, a feast for a lord,
And sheep's heads, the fattest our hills could afford;
But a dish o' gude brose was the king o' the board.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

Whare then were our bucks, and our bloods, and our beaux,
Wi' their lang-leggit breeks and their short-leggit hose?
The devil a breek did we wear when we'd brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

Our baby bit lassies buskit[1] up to be shows,
Their white-washen cheeks they would blush like the rose,
Could they see how their grandmothers thrave upon brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

[1] decked.

Nae born coupers then sought to gather a pose
By grindin' aff puir bodies faces the nose;
But man, wife, and wean, they got wamefu's o' brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

But now that the Thistle is joined to the Rose,
And Scotsmen and Englishmen nae mair at blows,
We've lost a great deal of our relish for brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

Yet still wi' the foremost we'll cock up our nose,
And deal out Scots measure to a' our proud foes.
Let the French then beware of our beef and our brose.
Oh, the kail brose, &c.

Yet, gi'e but a Scotsman a cog o' kail brose,
A jorum o' whiskey, and prime weel his nose,
Wi' the French, wi' the Dons, wi' the Devil he'll close.
Oh, the kail brose of auld Scotland,
And oh, the Scottish kail brose!

JAMES FORDYCE.

1720-1796.

Not the least of the many poets of Scotland who have been of the Kirk, Dr. Fordyce was minister first of Brechin, and afterwards of a presbyterian church in London, where his preaching made him the fashion of the hour. His song, "The Black Eagle," he wrote for a pathetic air of that name in Oswald's collections of Scots tunes. He published a volume of poems in 1786, and a considerable number of sermons and clerical studies. He was a native of Aberdeen, where his father, George Fordyce of Broadford, was a substantial merchant, and at one time Provost. After a quarrel with his colleagues, which occasioned a dissension in his church, Fordyce's popularity waned, and he retired to Bath, where he died.

THE BLACK EAGLE.

HARK! yonder eagle lonely wails;
His faithful bosom grief assails.
Last night I heard him in my dream,
When death and woe were all the theme,
Like that poor bird I make my moan—
I grieve for dearest Delia gone;
With him to gloomy rocks I fly:
He mourns for love, and so do I.
'Twas mighty love that tamed his breast;
'Tis tender grief that breaks his rest;
He droops his wings, he hangs his head

Since she he fondly loved is dead.
With Delia's breath my joy expired;
'Twas Delia's smiles my fancy fired.
Like that poor bird I pine, and prove
Nought can supply the place of love.
Dark as his feathers was the fate
That robbed him of his darling mate;
Dimmed is the lustre of his eye,
That wont to gaze the sun-bright sky.
To him is now for ever lost
The heartfelt bliss he once could boast:—
Thy sorrows, hapless bird, display,
An image of my soul's dismay.

HECTOR MACNEIL.

1746-1818.

Like more than one other Scottish poet of his century the once famous author of "Scotland's Skaith" and half a dozen well-known songs, led in his early years a somewhat wandering and adventurous life. Descended from an ancient Highland family, and a son of a retired captain of the 42nd regiment, he was born at romance-haunted Roslin on the Esk near Edinburgh. At the age of fourteen he was sent to sea by a Bristol relative, and some years were spent by him variously in St. Christopher and in Jamaica. He also made two cruises under Kempenfeldt, and experienced something of the risks of war. For a time he settled in a farmhouse near Stirling and essayed to make a living by his pen. Both means and health failing him, however, he returned to Jamaica. There he renewed acquaintance with his former employer, a planter on Three Mile River, who was so generous as to settle on him an annuity of £100. With this he returned to Scotland, and spent the last fifteen years of his life amid the literary society of Edinburgh.

In 1789, while settled near Stirling, Macneil published "The Harp, a Legendary Tale," but with no success. In 1795, however, he followed this with his poem "Scotland's Skaith, or the History of Will and Jean," and in 1796 produced a sequel, "The Waes o' War." Both of these last-named pieces were directed against the abuse of drink, and they had an immense circulation in their day, chiefly in the form of temperance tracts among the working classes. The poet's most ambitious piece, "The Pastoral or Lyric Muse of Scotland," in three cantos, was published, along with a ballad entitled "Dornock Ha'," in 1808; and a satire from his pen, entitled "Town Fashions, or Modern Manners Delineated," appeared two years later. He is now remembered chiefly by his songs, of which six or seven remain among the favourites in every Scottish collection. Of what is perhaps the most popular of these, "I lo'ed ne'er a laddie but ane," the first eight lines are said to have been written by the Rev. Mr. Clunie of Borthwick. Some of the touches in this

song remain among the finest of the Scottish lyric muse, while "Come under my Plaidie," "My boy Tammy," and other compositions prove Macneil's genius to have been as varied as it was characteristically Scottish.

Collections of Macneil's poems appeared at Philadelphia in 1815 and at Edinburgh in 1856, and the greater number of his pieces are included in the late Charles Mackay's edition of Allan Ramsay, Hamilton of Bangour, and others. Among other novels which he wrote, one, the *Memoirs of Charles Macpherson, Esq.*, is supposed to relate his own wanderings and adventures.

"I LO'ED NE'ER A LADDIE BUT ANE."

I LO'ED ne'er a laddie but ane,
He lo'es na a lassie but me;
He's willing to mak' me his ain,
And his ain I am willing to be.
He coft[1] me a rokelay[2] o' blue,
And a pair o' mittens o' green;
He vowed that he'd ever be true,
And I plighted my troth yestreen.

[1] bought.
[2] short cloak.

Let ithers brag weel o' their gear,
Their land and their lordly degree;
I carena for aught but my dear,
For he's ilka thing lordly to me.
His words are sae sugared, sae sweet,
His sense drives ilk fear far awa';
I listen, puir fool, and I greet,
Yet how sweet are the tears as they fa'!

"Dear lassie," he cries wi' a jeer,
"Ne'er heed what the auld anes will say:
Though we've little to brag o', ne'er fear,
What's gowd to a heart that is wae?
Our laird has baith honours and wealth,
Yet see how he's dwining[1] wi' care;
Now we, though we've naething but health,
Are cantie and leal evermair.

[1] dwindling.

"O Menie[2], the heart that is true
Has something mair costly than gear;
Ilk e'en it has naething to rue,
Ilk morn it has naething to fear.
Ye warldlings, gae hoard up your store,
And tremble for fear aught ye tyne[3];
Guard your treasures wi' lock, bar, and door,
While here in my arms I lock mine!"

[2] Mariamne.

[3] lose.

He ends wi' a kiss and a smile—
Wae's me, can I tak' it amiss?
My laddie's unpractised in guile,
He's free aye to daut[4] and to kiss.
Ye lasses wha lo'e to torment
Your wooers wi' fause scorn and strife,
Play your pranks; I ha'e gi'en my consent,
And this night I am Jamie's for life.

[4] pet.

"SAW YE MY WEE THING?"

"Oh, saw ye my wee thing? saw ye my ain thing?
Saw ye my true love down by yon lea?
Crossed she the meadow yestreen at the gloaming?
Sought she the burnie whare flowers the haw-tree?
Her hair it is lintwhite, her skin it is milkwhite,
Dark is the blue o' her saft rolling e'e;
Red red her ripe lips, and sweeter than roses!
Whare could my wee thing ha'e wandered frae me?"

"I saw na your wee thing, I saw na your ain thing,
Nor saw I your true love down by yon lea;
But I met a bonnie thing, late in the gloaming,
Down by the burnie whare flowers the haw-tree.
Her hair it was lintwhite, her skin it was milkwhite;
Dark was the blue o' her saft rolling e'e;
Red were her ripe lips, and sweeter than roses;
Sweet were the kisses that she gae to me."

"It was na my wee thing, it was na my ain thing,
It was na my true love ye met by the tree:
Proud is her leal heart, and modest her nature,
She never lo'ed ony till ance she lo'ed me.

Her name it is Mary, she's frae Castlecary;
Aft has she sat, when a bairn, on my knee.
Fair as your face is, were't fifty times fairer,
Young bragger, she ne'er wad gi'e kisses to thee."

"It was then your Mary; she's frae Castlecary;
It was then your true love I met by the tree.
Proud as her heart is, and modest her nature,
Sweet were the kisses that she ga'e to me."
Sair gloomed his dark brow, blood-red his cheek grew,
And wild flashed the fire frae his red-rolling e'e:
"Ye'se rue sair this morning your boasts and your scorning,
Defend ye, fause traitor! fu' loudly ye lee!"

"Awa' wi' beguiling!" cried the youth smiling:
Aff went the bonnet, the lintwhite locks flee;
The belted plaid fa'ing, her white bosom shawing,
Fair stood the loved maid with the dark rolling e'e.
"Is it my wee thing? is it my ain thing?
Is it my true love here that I see?"
"Oh Jamie, forgi'e me! your heart's constant to me!
I'll never mair wander, dear laddie, frae thee."

COME UNDER MY PLAIDIE.

"Come under my plaidie, the night's gaun to fa';
Come in frae the cauld blast, the drift, and the snaw:
Come under my plaidie, and sit down beside me,
There's room in't, dear lassie, believe me, for twa.
Come under my plaidie, and sit down beside me,
I'll hap ye frae every cauld blast that can blaw:
Oh, come under my plaidie, and sit down beside me!
There's room in't, dear lassie, believe me, for twa."

"Gae 'wa wi' your plaidie, auld Donald, gae 'wa!
I fearna the cauld blast, the drift, nor the snaw:
Gae 'wa wi' your plaidie; I'll no sit beside ye,
Ye may be my gutcher[1]; auld Donald, gae 'wa.
I'm gaun to meet Johnnie—he's young and he's bonnie;
He's been at Meg's bridal, fu' trig[2] and fu' braw:
Oh, nane dances sae lightly, sae gracefu', sae tightly;
His cheek's like the new rose, his brow's like the snaw."

"Dear Marion, let that flee stick fast to the wa':
Your Jock's but a gowk[3], and has naething ava;
The hale o' his pack he has now on his back:
He's thretty, and I am but threescore and twa.

[1] grandfather.

[2] smart.

[3] fool, *lit.* cuckoo.

Be frank now and kindly: I'll busk[1] ye aye finely,
To kirk or to market there'll few gang sae braw;
A bien[2] house to bide in, a chaise for to ride in,
And flunkies to 'tend ye as aft as ye ca'."

[1] dress, deck.
[2] comfortable.

"My father's aye tauld me, my mither an a',
Ye'd mak' a gude husband, and keep me aye braw:
It's true I lo'e Johnnie—he's gude and he's bonnie,
But, wae's me! ye ken he has naething ava.
I ha'e little tocher[3]: you've made a good offer:
I'm now mair than twenty—my time is but sma';
Sae, gi'e me your plaidie, I'll creep in beside ye,
I thocht ye'd been aulder than threescore and twa."

[3] dower.

She crap in ayont him, aside the stane wa',
Where Johnnie was list'ning, and heard her tell a':
The day was appointed: his proud heart it dunted[4],
And strack 'gainst his side as if bursting in twa.
He wandered hame weary: the night it was dreary;
And, thowless[5], he tint his gate[6] 'mang the deep snaw:
The owlet was screamin'; while Johnnie cried,
"Women
Wad marry Auld Nick if he'd keep them aye braw!"

[4] thumped.
[5] pithless.
[6] lost his way.

JEANIE'S BLACK E'E.

THE sun rase so rosy, the grey hills adorning,
Light sprang the laverock, and mounted sae hie,
When, true to the tryste o' blythe May's dewy morning,
Jeanie cam' linking[1] out owre the green lea.
To mark her impatience I crap 'mang the brakens:—
Aft, aft to the kent gate she turned her black e'e;
Then, lying down dowilie, sighed by the willow tree,
"*Ha me mohátel, na dousku me!*" *

[1] stepping gaily.

Saft through the green birks I stole to my jewel,
Streeked[2] on spring's carpet aneath the saugh tree[3];
"Think na, dear lassie, that Willie's been cruel!"
"*Ha me mohátel, na dousku me!*"
"Wi' love's warm sensations I've marked your impatience:
Lang hid 'mang the brakens I watched your black e'e.
Ye're no sleeping, pawkie Jean; open thae lovely e'en!"
"*Ha me mohátel, na dousku me!*"

[2] stretched.
[3] willow.

* "*Tha mi 'n am chodal, 's na duisgibh me!*"
"I am asleep, do not waken me."

"Bright is the whin's bloom, ilk green knowe adorning,
Sweet is the primrose, bespangled wi' dew;
Yonder comes Peggie to welcome May morning—
Dark wave her haffet[1] locks o'er her white brow. [1] side.
O light, light she's dancing keen on the smooth gow'ny green,
Barefoot, and kilted half up to the knee:
While Jeanie is sleeping still, I'll rin and sport my fill."
"I was asleep, and ye've wakened me."

"I'll rin and whirl her round—Jeanie is sleeping sound—
Kiss her frae lug to lug, no ane can see!
Sweet, sweet's her hinny mou'!"—"Will, I'm no sleepin' now;
I was asleep, but ye've wakened me."
Laughing till like to drap, swith[2] to my Jean I lap, [2] swift.
Kissed her ripe roses, and blessed her black e'e;
And aye since, whene'er we meet, sing, for the sound is sweet,
"*Ha me mohátel, na dousku me!*"

MICHAEL BRUCE.

1746-1767.

Loch Leven, the classic loch of Scotland, contains among its storied associations the memories of two conspicuous poets. Androw of Wyntoun, the author of the quaint *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, was prior of St. Serf's Inch in the fourteenth century. And in the eighteenth Michael Bruce was born and died in the little hamlet of Kinnesswood, at the foot of the Lomond Hills.

The son of Alexander Bruce, a weaver, the young poet of "Kinaskit" gave early evidence of ability, and, though one of a family of eight, was sent to Edinburgh University to study for the ministry. As in many a similar case in Scotland, however, the strain of study during winter, and school-teaching in summer, with the deprivations of narrow means, acting on a constitution never robust, threw him into a consumption, and in his twenty-first year he returned home to die.

After Bruce's death, John Logan, a fellow-student, obtained from Alexander Bruce the entire manuscripts and correspondence of the young poet, holding out the hope, it is said, that their publication would realize enough for the support of the little Kinnesswood household in years to come. Three years later, in 1770, Logan published a small volume "Poems on Several Occasions, by Michael Bruce." The book contained only seventeen pieces, and in a preface by the anonymous editor it was stated that "to make up a miscellany, some poems, wrote by different authors, were inserted, all of them original, and none of them destitute of merit." The name of none of these writers was given. "The reader of taste," said the preface, "will easily distinguish them from those of Mr. Bruce without their being particularised by any mark." When the old Kinnesswood weaver looked through this volume he is said to have burst into tears, with the exclamation, "Where are my son's Gospel sonnets?" Six copies of the volume were all the return he ever received, and when he journeyed to Edinburgh to recover the MSS., he was told by Logan that the servants had singed fowls with them.

Eleven years later Logan, by that time one of the ministers of Leith, published a volume of poems under his own name, including nine hymns, of which several were at once recognised by the villagers of Kinnesswood as among certain "Gospel sonnets" or "paraphrases" which had been written by Bruce for their psalmody class, and of which they still possessed the original copies made for them by the poet. Logan also included as his own the "Ode to the Cuckoo," which had been the most admired piece in the volume of 1770. From that time the authorship of the ode became a question of high literary dispute.

A year after Logan's publication of the piece as his own, the question might be held to have been decided by a court of law. A few admirers of Bruce in Stirling proposed to reprint the volume of 1770, and Logan applied for an interdict on the ground that he was himself "in a great measure the author of the collection of poems in question." The case, however, was finally decided against him, his alleged rights were set aside, and his statements held disproved.

Notwithstanding this decision, or rather, perhaps, in ignorance of it, Dr. Anderson, in his collection of British Poets, assigned the ode to Logan. On being taken to task for doing so by one of the Kinnesswood villagers, he cited the authority of Dr. Baird. In the year following Dr. Anderson's publication, however, Dr. Baird himself produced a new edition of Bruce's poems, in which he included the "Ode to the Cuckoo" without comment, having meanwhile, it appears, come upon a copy of it in Bruce's own handwriting.

Mrs. Hutcheson, it is true, Logan's cousin, stated that she had seen the ode in her kinsman's handwriting before it was printed; and Dr. Robertson, Logan's literary executor, in the Life prefixed to Logan's "Sermons," averred that Logan had acknowledged to him his own authorship of the "Cuckoo"; also that the ode was handed about among Logan's literary acquaintance in East Lothian "probably, though not certainly," as early as 1767. On the other hand, the uncertainty of this reminiscence has been pointed out, and it has been noted that although the ode had actually been seen in Logan's writing as early as 1767, this would afford no evidence of Logan's authorship, for he received the MS. in that year from Bruce's father. There remain, moreover, on Bruce's side several points of testimony which, to say the least, must be taken as of equal weight with the statements of Mrs. Hutcheson and Dr. Robertson. In reply to Dr. Anderson's enquiries, David Pearson, the intimate friend and bedfellow of the poet, wrote that on going to visit Alexander Bruce a few days after his son's death, the old man brought out his son's "poem-book," and read the "Ode to the Cuckoo" and the "Musiad" to his visitor, being much overcome in the reading. The same witness also stated that he had repeatedly both heard and read the ode during the lifetime of the poet; and he averred explicitly "the 'Cuckoo,' and the

hymns in the end of Logan's book are assuredly Michael Bruce's productions."* Again, John Birrell, another intimate friend of Michael Bruce, informed Dr. Mackelvie, Bruce's editor of 1837, how again and again he had seen Alexander Bruce take up the little volume of 1770, and, reading the "Ode to the Cuckoo," the "Elegy," and "Lochleven," weep as he recalled the circumstances under which these pieces were composed by his son. Still further, Professor Davidson of Aberdeen stated to Dr. Mackelvie that his father, Dr. Davidson of Kinross, had told him he had seen a letter of Michael Bruce, in which the poet said, "You will think me ill employed, for I am writing about a gowk" (cuckoo); and that he himself (the professor) subsequently, on visiting in the neighbourhood of Kinnesswood, about the year 1786, had seen in the possession of a Mr. Bickerton a copy of the ode, written on a very small quarto page (exactly the shape of page upon which all extant letters of the poet are written), signed Michael Bruce, and with the single line below it, "You will think I might have been better employed than writing about a gowk." The handwriting, Mr. Bickerton assured the professor, was that of the poet.

It must be remarked, as seriously damaging to the case of Logan, that he seems to have made small scruple in several different instances, in appropriating matter which was not his own. In his volume of 1781 he printed as original two paraphrases, the second and eighteenth in the authorised Scottish version, which, almost word for word had been published in the interim edition of the "Scottish Paraphrases" of 1745; one of them, "O God of Bethel," being by Dr. Doddridge, and republished among that divine's posthumous hymns in 1755.† These had been revised by Bruce for the local psalmody class, and Logan, unaware of their origin, appropriated them from his dead friend's MS. Another instance was pointed out by Professor Veitch in an article on "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow" in Blackwood's Magazine for June, 1890. In the ballad of Yarrow which Scott prized so much, and which, according to Veitch, sets its author higher than anything else he has written, Logan has taken a verse bodily from an ancient version of "The Dowie Dens." It appears in the volume of 1770.

"They sought him east, they sought him west," etc.

This may be no very heinous offence, as it was a common practice with the ballad and song writers of the time. But the same thing cannot be said of a remaining charge. This appears in a volume on "Muirkirk and Neighbourhood," by the Rev. Peter

* Pearson's letter was among Dr. Baird's MSS., and is printed in an article by Dr. Small in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1877.

† In Doddridge's "Hymns" the first two lines run—

"O God of Jacob, by whose hand
Thine Israel still is fed!"

Mearns—"Having got possession of one of the MS. volumes on history of the Rev. W. Rutherford, D.D., afterwards minister of Muirkirk, Logan in the college session of 1779-80 read these lectures with much applause as professedly his own. Dr. Rutherford, however, in Logan's lifetime, afterwards published the lectures as his in a volume, and Logan did not, and dared not, dispute Dr. Rutherford's claim." In his sermons, as well, it has been pointed out, Logan made no scruple of appropriating the work of Sherlock and Blair.

In the best editions of Bruce's poems, those by Dr. Mackelvie in 1837, by the Rev. Alexander Grosart in 1865, and by the Rev. William Stephen in 1895, the case for the Lochleven poet is fully stated. The rival claims to the authorship of the "Cuckoo" have also been discussed at length by David Laing in a letter printed in 1873, and by Principal Shairp in an article in *Good Words* of the same year; and the authorship of the Paraphrases has been dealt with in articles by Dr. J. Small in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* in 1877, and by Mr. Cuthbert Hadden in the *Scottish Review* for October, 1893.

By some critics, like Sir George Douglas, who in his *Scottish Minor Poets* assigns the ode to Logan, it is urged that much of the evidence on both sides is hearsay, and that the tendency to assign the piece to Bruce has been rather out of sympathy for his amiable character and sad fate, than on the merits of the case. It cannot be said that the internal evidence of the piece helps much towards a decision either way. It was pointed out, however, by the editor of "The Poetic Wreath" of 1836 that "no one of Logan's unquestioned pieces makes the slightest approach to the ode in beautiful simplicity." In the edition of 1781 Logan made several alterations in the ode, but it remains doubtful whether these are improvements in more than one instance, and every editor is aware how possible it is, and how tempting sometimes to "improve" even classic productions. The reader must be left to form his own conclusion on the whole subject from such circumstantial proof as is available. This has been detailed here at length from a desire both to gather together some evidence hitherto unused, and to afford an example of a kind of literary question for which the eighteenth century, both in England and in Scotland, was notorious.

Besides his shorter pieces Bruce was the author of "Lochleven," a descriptive poem in the blank verse of Thomson, and "The Last Day," a composition which he was engaged in polishing when he died. Both of these contain beautiful passages of natural description, but as sustained works they do not show the poet at his best.

ODE TO THE CUCKOO.

Hail, beauteous stranger of the wood!
Attendant on the Spring!
Now heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

Soon as the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear:
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
When heaven is filled with music sweet
Of birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy wand'ring in the wood
To pull the flowers so gay,
Starts thy curious voice to hear
And imitates thy lay.

Soon as the pea puts on the bloom
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
  Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
  No winter in thy year!

Alas! sweet bird! not so my fate;
  Dark scowling skies I see
Fast gathering round, and fraught with woe
  And wintry years to me.

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee:
  We'd make, with social wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
  Companions of the Spring.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN SPRING.

'Tis past: the iron North has spent his rage;
Stern Winter now resigns the length'ning day;
The stormy howlings of the winds assuage,
And warm o'er ether western breezes play.

Of genial heat and cheerful light the source,
From southern climes, beneath another sky,
The sun, returning, wheels his golden course;
Before his beams all noxious vapours fly.

Far to the North grim Winter draws his train
To his own clime, to Zembla's frozen shore,
Where, throned on ice, he holds eternal reign,
Where whirlwinds madden, and where tempests roar.

Loosed from the bands of frost, the verdant ground
Again puts on her robe of cheerful green,
Again puts on her flowers; and all around,
Smiling, the cheerful face of Spring is seen.

Behold, the trees new deck their withered boughs;
Their ample leaves the hospitable plane,
The taper elm, and lofty ash, disclose;
The blooming hawthorn variegates the scene.

The lily of the vale, of flowers the queen,
Puts on the robe she neither sewed nor spun;
The birds on ground or on the branches green,
Hop to and fro, and glitter in the sun.

Soon as o'er eastern hills the morning peers,
From her low nest the tufted lark upsprings,
And, cheerful singing, up the air she steers;
Still high she mounts, still loud and sweet she sings.

On the green furze, clothed o'er with golden blooms,
That fill the air with fragrance all around,
The linnet sits, and tricks his glossy plumes,
While o'er the wild his broken notes resound.

While the sun journeys down the western sky,
Along the greensward, marked with Roman mound,
Beneath the blithesome shepherd's watchful eye,
The cheerful lambkins dance and frisk around.

Now is the time for those who wisdom love,
Who love to walk in Virtue's flowery road,
Along the lovely paths of Spring to rove,
And follow Nature up to Nature's God.

Thus Zoroaster studied Nature's laws;
Thus Socrates, the wisest of mankind;
Thus heaven-taught Plato traced th' almighty Cause,
And left the wond'ring multitude behind.

Thus Ashley gathered academic bays,
  Thus gentle Thomson, as the seasons roll,
Taught them to sing the great Creator's praise,
  And bear their poet's name from pole to pole.

Thus have I walked along the dewy lawn,
  My frequent foot the blooming wild hath worn,
Before the lark I've sung the beauteous dawn,
  And gathered health from all the gales of morn.

And even when Winter chilled the aged year,
  I wandered lonely o'er the hoary plain;
Though frosty Boreas warned me to forbear,
  Boreas, with all his tempests, warned in vain.

Then, sleep my nights, and quiet blessed my days;
  I feared no loss, my mind was all my store;
No anxious wishes e'er disturbed my ease;
  Heaven gave content and health—I asked no more.

Now Spring returns; but not to me returns
  The vernal joy my better years have known:
Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,
  And all the joys of life with health are flown.

Starting and shivering in th' inconstant wind,
  Meagre and pale—the ghost of what I was,
Beneath some blasted tree I lie reclined,
  And count the silent moments as they pass—

The wingéd moments, whose unstaying speed
No art can stop, or in their course arrest,
Whose flight shall shortly count me with the dead,
And lay me down in peace with them that rest.

Oft morning dreams presage approaching fate;—
And morning dreams, as poets tell, are true:
Led by pale ghosts, I enter Death's dark gate,
And bid the realms of light and life adieu.

I hear the helpless wail, the shriek of woe;
I see the muddy wave, the dreary shore,
The sluggish streams that slowly creep below,
Which mortals visit—and return no more.

Farewell, ye blooming fields! ye cheerful plains!
Enough for me the churchyard's lonely mound,
Where Melancholy with still Silence reigns,
And the rank grass waves o'er the cheerless ground.

There let me wander at the shut of eve,
When Sleep sits dewy on the labourer's eyes,—
The world and all its busy follies leave,
And talk with Wisdom where my Daphnis lies.

There let me sleep forgotten in the clay,
When Death shall shut these weary aching eyes,—
Rest in the hopes of an eternal day,
Till the long night is gone, and the last morn arise.

THE COMPLAINT OF NATURE.*

Few are thy days and full of woe,
O man of woman born!
Thy doom is written, dust thou art,
And shalt to dust return.

Determined are the days that fly
Successive o'er thy head;
The numbered hour is on the wing,
That lays thee with the dead.

Alas! the little day of life
Is shorter than a span;
Yet black with thousand hidden ills
To miserable man.

Gay is thy morning, flattering Hope
Thy sprightly step attends;
But soon the tempest howls behind,
And the dark night descends.

* This "Complaint" was one of the sets of verses composed by Bruce for Buchan's psalmody class in Kinnesswood in 1764. Logan printed it as his own in 1781. A selection of its stanzas now stands as No. viii. in the "Translations and Paraphrases" of the Church of Scotland.

Before its splendid hour the cloud
Comes o'er the beam of light;
A pilgrim in a weary land,
Man tarries but a night.

Behold, sad emblem of thy state,
The flowers that paint the field,
Or trees that crown the mountain's brow,
And boughs and blossoms yield.

When chill the blast of winter blows,
Away the summer flies,
The flowers resign their sunny robes,
And all their beauty dies.

Nipt by the year the forest fades,
And, shaking to the wind,
The leaves toss too and fro, and streak
The wilderness behind.

The winter past, reviving flowers
Anew shall paint the plain;
The woods shall hear the voice of Spring,
And flourish green again.

But man departs this earthly scene,
Ah! never to return:
No second spring shall e'er revive
The ashes of the urn.

Th' inexorable doors of death
What hand can e'er unfold?
Who, from the cerements of the tomb
Can raise the human mould?

The mighty flood that rolls along
Its torrents to the main,
The waters lost can ne'er recall
From that abyss again.

The days, the years, the ages, dark
Descending down to night,
Can never, never be redeemed
Back to the gates of light.

So man departs the living scene
To night's perpetual gloom;
The voice of morning ne'er shall break
The slumbers of the tomb.

Where are our fathers? whither gone
The mighty men of old?
The patriarchs, prophets, princes, kings,
In sacred books enrolled?

Gone to the resting-place of man,
The everlasting home,
Where ages past have gone before,
Where future ages come.

Thus Nature poured the wail of woe,
And urged her earnest cry;
Her voice in agony extreme
Ascended to the sky.

Th' Almighty heard; then from his throne
In majesty he rose,
And from the heaven, that opened wide,
His voice in mercy flows.

When mortal man resigns his breath,
And falls, a clod of clay,
The soul immortal wings its flight
To never-setting day.

Prepared of old for wicked men
The bed of torment lies;
The just shall enter into bliss
Immortal in the skies.

ADAM AUSTIN.

1726?-1774.

Dr. Austin, who became a medical practitioner of note in Edinburgh in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, in early life suffered a love disappointment which has kept his memory green. Miss Jean Drummond, the young lady who forsook him, did so to marry James, Duke of Athole, in 1749. On the death of that nobleman she became the wife of Lord Adam Gordon. By that time Dr. Austin, who had not fulfilled his threat of roving, had for some time been comfortably married. His wife was Anne, sister of John, Lord Sempill; and by her he had a numerous family.

FOR LACK OF GOLD.

For lack of gold she's left me, O,
And of all that's dear bereft me, O;
She me forsook for Athole's duke,
And to endless woe she has left me, O.
A star and garter have more art
Than youth, a true and faithful heart;
For empty titles we must part,
And for glittering show she's left me, O.

No cruel fair shall ever move
My injured heart again to love;
Through distant climates I must rove,
Since Jeanie she has left me, O.
Ye powers above, I to your care
Give up my faithless, lovely fair;
Your choicest blessings be her share,
Though she's for ever left me, O!

MRS. GRANT OF CARRON.

1745-1814.

The authoress of the spirited song of "Roy's Wife" was a native of Speyside, born near Aberlour. Carron-on-Spey was the residence of her first husband, but she afterwards married Dr. Murray of Bath. The song is sometimes wrongly attributed to the more famous Mrs. Grant of Laggan. Roy of Aldivalloch distinguished himself by holding one of the lesser islands in the Firth of Forth, with a small company, during one of the risings of the clans. The Balloch of the song was, of course, that at the foot of Loch Tay, now known as Taymouth.

ROY'S WIFE.

Roy's wife of Aldivalloch!
Roy's wife of Aldivalloch!—
Wat ye how she cheated me
As I cam' o'er the braes o' Balloch.

She vowed, she swore, she wad be mine
She said she lo'ed me best of ony;
But ah! the fickle, faithless quean,
She's ta'en the carle, and left her Johnnie.

O, she was a canty quean,
Weel could she dance the Highland walloch;
How happy I, had she been mine,
Or I been Roy of Aldivalloch!

Her hair sae fair, her e'en sae clear,
Her wee bit mou' sae sweet and bonnie;
To me she ever will be dear,
Though she's for ever left her Johnnie.

SUSANNA BLAMIRE.

1747-1794.

Scottish only by adoption, the authoress of "In Silk Attire," "The Nabob," and other well-known pieces, was the daughter of William Blamire of The Oaks in Cumberland. She was born at Cardew Hall, near Carlisle, and as her mother died early, she was brought up by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Simpson of Thackwood. A romantic but unhappy attachment which she formed while still a girl is said to have induced her to remain single during the whole of her life. She was visiting at Chillingham, when an affection developed between herself and Lord Ossulston, eldest son of her host, the Earl of Tankerville. His family, however, had projects of a more ambitious alliance for the heir of the earldom, and the youthful pair had to give way to circumstances. Her disappointment, nevertheless, did not embitter the spirit of the lady. In 1767 her sister married Colonel Graham of Gartmore, and for the six following years Miss Blamire spent much of her time in Scotland. She wrote a variety of pieces in English, but is chiefly remembered by her Scottish songs. These were for long merely handed about in manuscript, and it was only in 1842 that they were collected and published at Edinburgh, the authoress being designated on the title-page the "Muse of Cumberland." At the time of publication, according to her biographer, she was still affectionately remembered, both in Cumberland and at Gartmore, as a beautiful and very lively young lady, of "graceful form, somewhat above the middle size, and a countenance—though slightly marked with the smallpox—beaming with good nature. Her dark eyes sparkled with animation, and won every heart at the first introduction." Her longest piece is a descriptive poem entitled "Stocklewath, or the Cumbrian Village."

AND YE SHALL WALK IN SILK ATTIRE.

And ye shall walk in silk attire,
And siller ha'e to spare,
Gin ye'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think o' Donald mair.
Oh, wha wad buy a silken goun
Wi' a puir broken heart?
Or what's to me a siller croun,
Gin frae my love I part?

The mind wha's every wish is pure
Far dearer is to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my faith,
I'll lay me doun and dee:
For I ha'e pledged my virgin troth
Brave Donald's fate to share;
And he has gi'en to me his heart,
Wi' a' its virtues rare.

His gentle manners wan my heart,
He gratefu' took the gift;
Could I but think to tak' it back,
It wad be waur than theft.
For langest life can ne'er repay
The love he bears to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my troth
I'll lay me doun and dee!

THE NABOB.

WHEN silent time, wi' lightly foot,
Had trod on thirty years,
I sought again my native land
Wi' mony hopes and fears.
Wha kens gin the dear friends I left
May still continue mine?
Or gin I e'er again shall taste
The joys I left langsyne?

As I drew near my ancient pile,
My heart beat a' the way;
Ilk place I passed seemed yet to speak
O' some dear former day:—
Those days that followed me afar,
Those happy days o' mine,
Whilk made me think the present joys
A' naething to langsyne.

The ivied tower now met my eye,
Where minstrels used to blaw;
Nae friend stepped forth wi' open hand,
Nae weel-kenned face I saw,

Till Donald tottered to the door,
Wham I left in his prime,
And grat to see the lad return
He bore about langsyne.

I ran to ilka dear friend's room,
As if to find them there;
I knew where ilk ane used to sit,
And hung o'er mony a chair;
Till soft remembrance threw a veil
Across these een o' mine—
I closed the door, and sobbed aloud,
To think on auld langsyne.

[1] conceited.

Some pensy[1] chiels, a new-sprung race,
Wad next their welcome pay,
Wha shuddered at my Gothic wa's,
And wished my groves away.
"Cut, cut," they cried, "those aged elms,
Lay low yon mournfu' pine!"
"Na, na! our fathers' names grow there,
Memorials o' langsyne."

To wean me fra these waefu' thoughts
They took me to the town,
But sair on ilka weel-kenned face
I missed the youthfu' bloom.
At balls they pointed to a nymph
Wham a' declared divine;
But sure her mother's blushing cheeks
Were fairer far langsyne!

In vain I sought in music's sound
To find that magic art
Which oft in Scotland's ancient lays
Has thrilled through a' my heart.
The sang had mony an artfu' turn:
My ear confessed 'twas fine;
But missed the simple melody
I listened to langsyne.

Ye sons to comrades o' my youth,
Forgi'e an auld man's spleen,
Wha midst your gayest scenes still mourns
The days he ance has seen.
When time has passed, and seasons fled,
Your hearts will feel like mine;
And aye the sang will maist delight
That minds ye o' langsyne.

RICHARD HEWITT.

—1794.

Little is known of the author of what Burns termed "these beautiful verses" on Roslin Castle. While Dr. Blacklock resided in Cumberland, Hewitt, then a lad, was employed to lead the blind poet. He afterwards acted as Blacklock's amanuensis, and, on leaving his services finally, he addressed to him some verses, in a note to which he refers to his own habit of rehearsing the narrative ballads of the countryside. Hewitt subsequently became secretary to Lord Milton. The air of "Roslin Castle" was at an early day known as "The House of Glammis." An earlier, anonymous song, with the same title of "Roslin Castle," was printed in Herd's Collection.

ROSLIN CASTLE.

'Twas in that season of the year
When all things gay and sweet appear,
That Colin, with the morning ray,
Arose and sung his rural lay.
Of Nanny's charms the shepherd sung:
The hills and dales with Nanny rung;
While Roslin Castle heard the swain,
And echoed back his cheerful strain.

Awake, sweet Muse! The breathing Spring
With rapture warms: awake and sing!
Awake and join the vocal throng,
And hail the morning with a song.

To Nanny raise the cheerful lay;
O! bid her haste and come away;
In sweetest smiles herself adorn,
And add new graces to the morn!

O look, my love: on every spray
Each feathered warbler tunes his lay:
'Tis beauty fires the ravished throng,
And love inspires the melting song.
Then let the raptured notes arise,
For beauty darts from Nanny's eyes,
And love my rising bosom warms,
And fills my soul with sweet alarms.

O come, my love! Thy Colin's lay
With rapture calls, O come away!
Come while the Muse this wreath shall twine
Around that modest brow of thine.
O hither haste, and with thee bring
That beauty blooming like the Spring—
Those graces that divinely shine,
And charm this ravished heart of mine!

JAMES TYTLER.

1747-1805.

"Balloon Tytler," so called from the fact of his having been the first in Scotland to ascend in a fire balloon of the kind invented by Montgolfier, was the son of a minister at Brechin. Educated first for the church and afterwards for the profession of medicine, he was chiefly occupied throughout his life in literary and chemical investigations. He was editor and principal compiler of the original Encyclopædia Britannica, and has left at least three well-known songs to enrich the poetic anthology of Scotland. "Loch Erroch Side" is named from Loch Erroch or Ericht, a large lake in Perthshire. "The Bonnie Bruckit Lassie" replaces an older song, of which the first two lines used by Tytler are all that remains. "Lass, gin ye lo'e me" was suggested by an old fragment which was printed by Herd. The author died at Massachussetts in 1805.

LOCH ERROCH SIDE.

As I cam' by Loch Erroch side,
The lofty hills surveying,
The water clear, the heather blooms,
Their fragrance sweet conveying;
I met, unsought, my lovely maid,
I found her like May morning;
With graces sweet, and charms so rare,
Her person all adorning.

How kind her looks, how blest was I,
While in my arms I prest her!
And she her wishes scarce concealed
As fondly I caressed her.
She said, "If that your heart be true,
If constantly you'll love me,
I heed not care, nor fortune's frowns,
For nought but death shall move me.

"But faithful, loving, true, and kind
For ever shalt thou find me;
And of our meeting here so sweet
Loch Erroch sweet shall mind me."
Enraptured then, "My lovely lass,"
I cried, "no more we'll tarry!
We'll leave the fair Loch Erroch side,
For lovers soon should marry."

THE BONNIE BRUCKIT LASSIE.

[1] streaked dark and pale in the face.

THE bonnie bruckit[1] lassie,
She's blue beneath the een:
She was the fairest lassie
That dansit on the green.
A lad he lo'ed her dearly,
She did his love return;
But he his vows has broken,
And left her for to mourn.

"My shape," she says, "was handsome,
My face was fair and clean;
But now I'm bonnie bruckit,
And blue beneath the een.
My eyes were bright and sparkling
Before that they turned blue;
But now they're dull wi' weeping,
And a', my love, for you.

"My person it was comely;
My shape, they said, was neat;
But now I am quite changit,
My stays they winna meet.

A' nicht I sleepit soundly ;
My mind was never sad ;
But now my rest is broken
Wi' thinking o' my lad.

"O could I live in darkness,
Or hide me in the sea,
Since my love is unfaithful,
And has forsaken me !
No other love I suffered
Within my breast to dwell ;
In nought I have offended,
But loving him too well !"

Her lover heard her mourning,
As by he chanced to pass ;
And pressed unto his bosom
The lovely bruckit lass.
"My dear," he said, "cease grieving ;
Since that ye lo'ed so true,
My bonnie, bruckit lassie,
I'll faithfu' prove to you."

LASS, GIN YE LO'E ME.

I HA'E laid a herring in saut,
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now!
I ha'e brewed a forpit o' maut[1],
And I canna come ilka day to woo.
I ha'e a calf will soon be a cow;
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now!
I ha'e a pig will soon be a sow,
And I canna come ilka day to woo.

I've a house on yonder muir,
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now!
Three sparrows may dance upon the floor,
And I canna come ilka day to woo.
I ha'e a but and I ha'e a ben;
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now!
I ha'e three chickens and a fat hen,
And I canna come ilka day to woo.

I've a hen wi' a happity leg[2],
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now!
Which ilka day lays me an egg,
And I canna come ilka day to woo.
I ha'e a kebbuck[3] upon my shelf,
Lass gin ye lo'e me tak' me now!
I downa[4] eat it all myself;
And I winna come ony mair to woo.

[1] quarter-peck of malt.

[2] one leg shorter than the other.

[3] a round of cheese.

[4] cannot.

JOHN LOGAN.

1748-1788.

More than one serious charge remains to darken the fame of the whilom friend of Michael Bruce, nevertheless he is entitled to consideration as a man of no small powers. The son of a farmer at Soutra, in Midlothian, he was educated at Edinburgh University, and became one of the ministers of Leith. In his volume of poems published in 1781, he included the "Ode to the Cuckoo" and a number of "paraphrases," or metrical versions of scripture, which on strong evidence are claimed as the productions of Michael Bruce and others. Perhaps the strongest proof against Logan is that he included in his volume two paraphrases—the second and eighteenth of the present authorised version—which had been published in the provisional edition of the "Scottish Paraphrases" in 1745. Bruce is known to have "improved" these two paraphrases for the singing class of his native village in 1764, and the presumption is that Logan, unaware of their real origin, annexed them along with the others in Bruce's MS., which he destroyed.

Logan was one of those appointed to revise the Paraphrases for the Church of Scotland, and he succeeded in inserting several under his own name. His most ambitious production was the tragedy or drama of "Runnimede," which was acted, but without much success, in Edinburgh. As in the case of John Home, this connection with the stage raised an outcry against him as a minister. At the same time certain personal excesses were alleged against him. He was forced accordingly to retire, and after a short career of literary adventure in London he died of a lingering illness. Several tragedies, lyrics, and lectures on history which he left in MS. have never been printed.

Logan's tragedy of "Runnimede," like most of his authentic poetry, is lacking in force. His two volumes of "Sermons," however, were recommended by Sir Walter Scott, and are still read. Certainly by far his finest poem is "The Braes of Yarrow," though one verse, "She sought him east," &c., is borrowed from the ancient ballad of "Willie drowned in Yarrow."

THE BRAES OF YARROW.

Thy braes were bonnie, Yarrow stream,
When first on them I met my lover;
Thy braes how dreary, Yarrow stream,
When now thy waves his body cover!
For ever now, O Yarrow stream!
Thou art to me a stream of sorrow;
For never on thy banks shall I
Behold my love, the flower of Yarrow.

He promised me a milk-white steed,
To bear me to his father's bowers;
He promised me a little page,
To squire me to his father's towers;
He promised me a wedding-ring—
The wedding-day was fixed to-morrow:
Now he is wedded to his grave,
Alas! his watery grave in Yarrow.

Sweet were his words when last we met;
My passion I as freely told him:
Clasped in his arms, I little thought
That I should never more behold him!
Scarce was he gone, I saw his ghost;
It vanished with a shriek of sorrow:
Thrice did the water-wraith ascend,
And gave a doleful groan through Yarrow.

His mother from the window looked,
With all the longing of a mother;
His little sister weeping walked
The greenwood path to meet her brother.
They sought him east, they sought him west,
They sought him all the Forest thorough;
They only saw the cloud of night,
They only heard the roar of Yarrow.*

No longer from thy window look—
Thou hast no son, thou tender mother!
No longer walk, thou little maid;
Alas! thou hast no more a brother.
No longer seek him east or west,
And search no more the Forest thorough;
For, wandering in the night so dark,
He fell a lifeless corpse in Yarrow.

The tear shall never leave my cheek,
No other youth shall be my marrow:
I'll seek thy body in the stream,
And then with thee I'll sleep in Yarrow.
The tear did never leave her cheek,
No other youth became her marrow;
She found his body in the stream,
And now with him she sleeps in Yarrow.

* These four lines are borrowed from the old ballad, "Willie drowned in Yarrow."

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY.

THE peace of Heaven attend thy shade,
My early friend, my favourite maid!
When life was new, companions gay,
We hailed the morning of our day.

Ah! with what joy did I behold
The flower of beauty fair unfold,
And feared no storm to blast thy bloom
Or bring thee to an early tomb.

Untimely gone! for ever fled
The roses of the cheek so red;
Th' affection warm, the temper mild,
The sweetness that in sorrow smiled.

Alas! the cheek where beauty glowed,
The heart where goodness overflowed,
A clod amid the valley lies,
And "dust to dust" the mourner cries.

O from thy kindred early torn,
And to thy grave untimely borne,
Vanished for ever from my view,
Thou sister of my soul, adieu!

Fair with my first ideas twined,
Thine image oft will meet my mind;
And, while remembrance brings thee near,
Affection sad will drop a tear.

How oft does sorrow bend the head,
Before we dwell among the dead!
Scarce in the years of manly prime,
I've often wept the wrecks of time.

What tragic tears bedew the eye!
What deaths we suffer ere we die!
Our broken friendships we deplore,
And loves of youth that are no more.

No after friendship e'er can raise
Th' endearments of our early days;
And ne'er the heart such fondness prove
As when it first began to love.

Affection dies, a vernal flower;
And love, the blossom of an hour;
The spring of fancy cares control,
And mar the beauty of the soul.

Versed in the commerce of deceit,
How soon the heart forgets to beat!
The blood runs cold at interest's call—
They look with equal eyes on all.

Then lovely nature is expelled,
And friendship is romantic held;
Then prudence comes, with hundred eyes—
The veil is rent, the vision flies.

The dear illusions will not last;
The era of enchantment's past;
The wild romance of life is done;
The real history is begun.

The sallies of the soul are o'er,
The feast of fancy is no more;
And ill the banquet is supplied
By form, by gravity, by pride.

Ye gods! whatever ye withhold,
Let my affections ne'er grow old;
Ne'er may the human glow depart,
Nor nature yield to frigid art!

Still may the generous bosom burn,
Though doomed to bleed o'er beauty's urn;
And still the friendly face appear,
Though moistened with a tender tear!

ELIZABETH HAMILTON.

1748-1816.

One of the books which are to be found without fail on the shelves of every cottage library in Scotland is "The Cottagers of Glenburnie." Its authoress, who died at Harrogate in 1816, produced several other works popular in their time, but the "Cottagers" and a single song are all of her productions that are now remembered.

MY AIN FIRESIDE.

I HA'E seen great anes, and sat in great ha's,
'Mang lords and fine ladies a' covered wi' braws;
At feasts made for princes, wi' princes I've been,
Whare the grand sheen o' splendour has dazzled my een;
But a sight sae delightfu', I trow, I ne'er spied,
As the bonnie blithe blink o' mine ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside!—
O there's nought to compare wi' ane's ain fireside!

Ance mair, Gude be thankit! round my ain heartsome ingle
Wi' the friends o' my youth I cordially mingle;
Nae forms to compel me to seem wae or glad,
I may laugh when I'm merry, and sigh when I'm sad;

Nae falsehood to dread, and nae malice to fear,
But truth to delight me, and friendship to cheer;
Of a' roads to happiness ever were tried,
There's nane half so sure as ane's ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside!—
O there's nought to compare wi' ane's ain fireside!

When I draw in my stool on my cosy hearthstane,
My heart loups sae light I scarce ken't for my ain;
Care's down on the wind, it is clean out o' sight,
Past troubles they seem but as dreams of the night;
I hear but kenn'd voices, kenn'd faces I see,
And mark saft affection glent fond frae ilk e'e;
Nae fleechings o' flattery, nae boastings o' pride—
'Tis heart speaks to heart at ane's ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside!—
O there's nought to compare wi' ane's ain fireside!

JOHN LOWE.

1750-1798.

Among the sweet minor singers of Scotland it is astonishing to consider how many sprang from the soil, and made for the ministry. One of these was John Lowe, the son of a gardener at Kenmure Castle, in Galloway. The parish school of Kells gave him the foundations of education, and by the teaching of sacred music and the violin in his leisure hours he managed to make his way to Edinburgh University. Like hundreds of poor Scottish students he had to support himself in the interval before obtaining a charge. For a time accordingly he lived as tutor in the family of Mr. Macghie, at Airds, near the confluence of the Dee and the Ken. While Lowe was there, about the year 1772, it happened that a Mr. Alexander Miller, a young surgeon, the accepted lover of Miss Mary Macghie, was drowned at sea. The circumstance suggested to Lowe the idea of his well-known ballad. For this he is said also to have written one of the airs adapted to it in Johnson's *Musical Museum*. Only one other composition is attributed to his pen, a song which appears in some collections under the title of "Pompey's Ghost."

Lowe was unsuccessful in life. He emigrated to America, broke his promise of marriage to a sister of Miss Macghie, was unhappy in the marriage which he did make, took to drink, and died at Fredericksburgh in Virginia, it is believed, of an overdose of laudanum.

MARY'S DREAM.

THE moon had climbed the highest hill
  Which rises o'er the source of Dee,
And from the eastern summit shed
  Her silver light on tower and tree;
When Mary laid her down to sleep,
  Her thoughts on Sandy far at sea;
When soft and low a voice was heard,
  Saying "Mary, weep no more for me!"

She from her pillow gently raised
Her head, to ask who there might be;
She saw young Sandy shivering stand
With visage pale and hollow e'e.
O Mary dear, cold is my clay,
It lies beneath a stormy sea;
Far, far from thee I sleep in death,
So Mary, weep no more for me!

"Three stormy nights and stormy days
We tossed upon the raging main,
And long we strove our bark to save,
But all our striving was in vain.
Even then, when horror chilled my blood,
My heart was filled with love for thee;
The storm is past, and I at rest,
So Mary, weep no more for me!

"O maiden dear, thyself prepare,
We soon shall meet upon that shore
Where love is free from doubt and care,
And thou and I shall part no more."
Loud crowed the cock, the shadows fled;
No more of Sandy could she see;
But soft the passing spirit said,
"Sweet Mary, weep no more for me!"

ROBERT GRAHAM
OF GARTMORE.

1750-1797.

By the chivalrous ring of his fine song, Graham of Gartmore might with justice be termed the last of the Cavalier Poets. For a time, indeed, Scott, who first printed the piece, attributed it to Montrose. Graham wrote also several other lyrics, none of which, however, equals his "Cavalier's Song."

The son of Nicol Graham of Gartmore, and Lady Margaret, daughter of the twelfth Earl of Glencairn, the poet acted for a time as Receiver-General for Jamaica, where also he was a planter. In 1785 he was chosen Rector of Glasgow University in opposition to Burke; and two years before he died he sat as Member of Parliament for Stirlingshire. His first wife was a Jamaica heiress, and on the death of the fifteenth and last Earl of Glencairn in 1796, he inherited some of that nobleman's estates, taking at the same time the name Cunninghame as a prefix to his own. Graham's second son became a *maréchal-de-camp* in the Austrian army.

CAVALIER'S SONG.

If doughty deeds my lady please,
Right soon I'll mount my steed;
And strong his arm, and fast his seat,
That bears frae me the meed.
I'll wear thy colours in my cap,
Thy picture in my heart;
And he that bends not to thine eye
Shall rue it to his smart!
Then tell me how to woo thee, love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake nae care I'll take,
Though ne'er another trow me.

If gay attire delight thine eye,
I'll dight me in array;
I'll tend thy chamber door all night,
And squire thee all the day.
If sweetest sounds can win thine ear,
These sounds I'll strive to catch;
Thy voice I'll steal to woo thysel',
That voice that nane can match.
Then tell me how to woo thee, love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake nae care I'll take,
Though ne'er another trow me.

But if fond love thy heart can gain,
I never broke a vow;
Nae maiden lays her skaith to me;
I never loved but you.
For you alone I ride the ring,
For you I wear the blue;
For you alone I strive to sing:
O tell me how to woo!
Then tell me how to woo thee, love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake nae care I'll take,
Though ne'er another trow me.

LADY ANNE LINDSAY.

1750-1825.

A curious parallel exists between the literary reputation of Lady Anne Lindsay and of Lady Wardlaw. The authorship of "Auld Robin Gray" was in its day the subject of almost as much discussion as that of "Hardyknute," and in each case the single piece remains its author's sole title to fame. Unlike her predecessor, however, Lady Anne Lindsay wrote a circumstantial account of the composition of her piece—an account which is chiefly notable for the effective manner in which it destroys, in the mind of the reader, the entire beauty of the ballad. Taken on its own merits, "Auld Robin Gray" possesses all the charm of pathetic truth, and must always rank as one of the finest ballads in the language; but when the reader is informed how the agony was deliberately manufactured by the authoress, that charm is apt to evaporate for ever. This account, with a revised, but not improved, copy of the song, was furnished to Sir Walter Scott by the authoress before she died, and was published in a thin quarto for the Bannatyne Club.

Lady Anne Lindsay was the eldest daughter of the fifth Earl of Balcarres, and Anne, a daughter of Sir Robert Dalrymple of Castletoun. Born at her father's seat of Balcarres in Fife, she married, in 1793, Sir Andrew Barnard, a son of the Bishop of Limerick, and Colonial Secretary at the Cape, whom she survived. She had no children, and died in Berkeley Square, London.

The original of Robin Gray, according to the authoress's account, was an old herd at Balcarres, and the ballad was written soon after the close of the year 1771. It was during a fit of melancholy following the marriage of a sister that, by way of diverting her thoughts, Lady Anne wrote the piece. There was an old air sung in the house, of which she was fond, but the words for it, beginning "The bridegroom greets when the sun gaes doun," were rather indelicate. To the lilt of this air she wrote the words of her ballad. In the midst of the writing, she says, she came to a pause. She had made the mother fall sick, broken the father's arm, and sent the lover to sea, but a

further affliction was needed to complete the misery of the heroine. In the emergency Lady Anne appealed to her little sister, afterwards Lady Hardwick, who was playing near her, and the child replied patly with "Steal the cow." The cow, accordingly, was stolen, and the ballad finished.

"Auld Robin Gray" became popular immediately, but for half a century its authorship remained a secret. By some the piece was attributed to David Rizzio; and the authoress narrates how as much as twenty guineas was offered in the newspapers for proof of its origin. Mr. Jerningham, secretary of the Antiquarian Society, himself called on Lady Anne with a view to ascertaining the source from which she had procured the ballad; but he defeated his purpose by the means which he took to entrap the secret from her. There were some, however, who appear to have suspected the truth. Among these was a Mr. Dalziel, an antiquarian of some acumen. His ear had caught the expression "to mak' the croun a pound," an expression which could not belong to the days of the "pound Scots," and once when the lady had finished singing her "old ballad," he remarked to her dryly, "You should rather have said 'To make the crown *twenty merks*.'"

The piece was translated into many languages, and became the subject of innumerable plays and pictures. Perhaps the most conclusive proof of its popularity was its performance under the windows of the authoress herself, on one occasion, by a troup of dancing dogs.

As if thoroughly to show how far she had departed from the flash of genius of her youth, Lady Anne wrote a lengthy sequel to her ballad. In this, old Robin is accommodatingly made to die, and "young Jamie" to marry the widow. By such an artistic anti-climax, added to the weakness of her "improved" edition, and her disillusioning revelation of the origin of the piece, the authoress has afforded quite sufficient grounds for a grave doubt of her actual authorship. The fact, however, since her letter to Scott, has never been disputed.

The ballad is here given in its original and finest form. The air to which it is now sung was the composition of the Rev. W. Leeves, rector of Wrington, who died in 1828, aged eighty.

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

When the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye a' at hame,
When a' the weary warld to sleep are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride,
But saving a croun he had naething else beside;
To mak' the croun a pound my Jamie gaed to sea,
And the croun and the pound, they were baith for me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,
When my mither she fell sick, and the cow was stown awa';
My father brak' his arm—my Jamie at the sea—
And auld Robin Gray cam' a-courtin' me.

My father couldna wark, my mither couldna spin;
I toiled day and night, but their bread I couldna win:
Auld Rob maintained them baith, and, wi' tears in his e'e,
Said, "Jeanie, for their sakes, will ye marry me?"

My heart it said na—I looked for Jamie back;
But the wind it blew hie, and the ship it was a wrack;
His ship it was a wrack—why didna Jeanie dee?
And why do I live to cry, Wae's me?

My father urged me sair; my mither didna speak,
But she looked in my face till my heart was like
to break.
They gi'ed him my hand—my heart was at the sea;
Sae auld Robin Gray, he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When, mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith—I couldna think it he,
Till he said, "I'm come hame, my love, to marry
thee."

O sair did we greet, and meikle did we say:
We took but ae kiss, and I bade him gang away.
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;
And why was I born to say, Wae's me?

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin;
I daurna think o' Jamie, for that wad be a sin.
But I'll do my best a gude wife to be,
For auld Robin Gray, he is kind to me.

WILLIAM DUDGEON.

1753-1813.

The author of the pastoral song, "The Maid that tends the Goats," was a farmer's son, was born at Tyningham, in East Lothian, and became himself a farmer of some consequence at Preston in Berwickshire. He is known to have written several other compositions, none of which, however, has been printed. Burns, who met him on his Border tour, speaks of him as "a poet at times," and he is said to have been an amateur also of painting and music.

THE MAID THAT TENDS THE GOATS.

Up amang yon cliffy rocks
Sweetly rings the rising echo
To the maid that tends the goats,
Lilting o'er her native notes.
Hark, she sings, "Young Sandy's kind,
And he's promised aye to lo'e me;
Here's a brooch I ne'er shall tine[1]
Till he's fairly married to me.
Drive away, ye drone, time,
And bring about our bridal day.

[1] lose.

"Sandy herds a flock o' sheep;
Aften does he blaw the whistle
In a strain sae saftly sweet,
Lammies list'ning daurna bleat.
He's as fleet's the mountain roe,
Hardy as the Highland heather,
Wading through the winter snow,
Keeping aye his flock together.
But a plaid, wi' bare houghs,
He braves the bleakest norlin blast.

"Brawly he can dance and sing
Canty glee, or Highland cronach[1];
Nane can ever match his fling
At a reel, or round a ring.
Wightly can he wield a rung;
In a brawl he's aye the bangster[2];
A' his praise can ne'er be sung
By the langest-winded sangster.
Sangs that sing o' Sandy
Come short, though they were e'er sae lang."

[1] lament.

[2] champion; *lit.* blusterer.

ROBERT FERGUSSON.

1750-1774.

Every Scotsman is supposed to be a worshipper of Robert Burns, and every reader of Burns is familiar with the name of Robert Fergusson; yet it may be doubted whether, even in Scotland, at the present day, there is a wide popular knowledge of Fergusson's poetry. The author of "Hallowfair" and "The Farmer's Ingle" wrote no popular songs, hence his comparative neglect. But apart from the fact that he struck the keynote, which was afterwards accentuated by the Ayrshire poet, of all the modern vernacular verse of Scotland, he remains, by reason both of his genius and of his tragic story, one of the three most interesting figures of eighteenth century Scottish poetic annals. The legitimate successor of Allan Ramsay as a painter of the humours of Scottish life and character, and the main link between that poet and Robert Burns, he stands first, among all the poets of the north, as a singer of city pleasures; and in particular he holds the place of laureate of the life of old Edinburgh.

Fergusson's father and mother both originally came from Aberdeenshire, and through his mother, the daughter of a farmer at Kildrummie, the poet might have claimed descent from the Forbeses of Tolquhon. His father, however, was a clerk in Edinburgh, earning only the scanty sum of twenty-five pounds a year, equal perhaps in purchasing power to a hundred pounds at the present day. On this income William Fergusson managed to rear respectably a family of no fewer than five. The poet was born, September 5, 1750, in the Cap-and-Feather Close, an alley which formerly, according to Chambers's *Traditions of Edinburgh*, "occupied the site of the North Bridge Street, and was entirely destroyed in 1767, when the Royalty was extended." The house "stood about the middle of the alley, consequently the spot of the poet's nativity must have been somewhere opposite the head of the Flesh-Market Stairs." Robert was the second son of the family, and, as his mother's favourite, and the least robust, was destined for the church. Accordingly, after four years at the High School of Edinburgh, he secured, through the influence of his mother's

relatives, a Fergusson bursary, under which he passed to the Grammar School of Dundee and the University of St. Andrews.

At the university he appears to have been distinguished as much by his high spirits as by his scholarly attainments. When a remittance arrived he would make the fact known by hanging a purse out at the window of his lodging; and he suffered extrusion once for four days for a somewhat irreverent joke perpetrated in the college chapel. Not only, however, did his gay spirits render him highly popular among his fellows, but his accomplishments were recognised by the authorities, who, to his chagrin, made him leader of the chapel psalmody; and his abilities gained him the notice and friendship of Wilkie, the author of the "Epigoniad," who was his professor in Natural Philosophy.

In 1768, however, his father died, and as his mother was reduced to take in boarders, Fergusson with secret satisfaction found himself compelled to give up thought of entering the church, and to seek more immediate means of living. His mother's brother, a factor in Aberdeenshire, invited him to his house and arranged an introduction for him to Lord Finlater; but Fergusson appeared on the occasion in such disordered dress that his uncle bade him leave the room, whereupon the poet indignantly took himself from the house. Presently he obtained a situation as copying clerk in the office of Charles Abercrombie, the Commissary Clerk of Edinburgh. His work there was the merest drudgery, and his pay was wretched, but presently he made acquaintance with some of the players and singers of the Edinburgh stage. Among these boon companions his wit and spirits rendered him highly acceptable, and thenceforth his evenings became as gay and convivial as his days were dull and uninteresting.

Then began his poetic career. At college he had written a dramatic fragment and a satiric "Elegy on the Death of Mr. David Gregory," and since returning to Edinburgh he had furnished Tenducci with three songs of no great merit, set to Scottish airs. But in 1771 he began to contribute to Ruddiman's *Weekly Magazine*, and in 1773 a collection of his pieces, which he put forth in volume form, succeeded so well as to bring him the sum of fifty pounds. The merit of his poetry gained him also the friendship of David Herd, through whom he became a member of the convivial Cape Club, and made the acquaintance of a circle of country lairds and congenial wits.

The fashion of Edinburgh at that time lent itself to much deep drinking; and between his own pleasure in merry company, and the fact that his poetic reputation and natural humour made him a most desirable companion, he was tempted to overtax a constitution at no time strong. On his sensitive and nervous mind the life of dissipation soon told. His nights of merriment were followed by mornings of remorse; some solemn words of warning and advice by the Rev. John Brown, great-grandfather of the

author of "Rab and his Friends," to which he listened in Haddington kirkyard, sank deep into his thoughts; and presently, so shaken were his nerves, that the death of a pet canary threw him into a religious melancholy, in which he burned his manuscript poems. When he was just recovering from this attack, he slipped on a stair and fell, receiving injuries which affected his brain. In their poverty his friends had no choice but to place him in the city madhouse. As they were conducting him over the threshold, it is said he suddenly realised his fate, and shrieked aloud, and his cry was answered by a shout from the other inmates of that fearful place which those who were with him never forgot. His end was not far off. On the last night of his life his mother was with him, and when the hour came for locking up he begged her with wild apprehension not to leave him. A few hours later he died in the darkness, alone. It was the 16th of October, 1774.

It is a tragic circumstance that immediately after his death a letter came from a former schoolfellow settled in India, enclosing a cheque for one hundred pounds, and inviting Fergusson to come out to a lucrative situation.

Some thirteen years afterwards a stone was placed at the grave of the dead poet in Canongate churchyard by Robert Burns, which still marks the spot.

In 1779 a second collection was published of the poems which Fergusson had contributed to *Ruddiman's Magazine;* and of his complete works there have been several later editions, the most recent being one published at Edinburgh in 1895 by W. H. White & Co. The poet's biography has been written by Dr. Grosart.

In Fergusson's case it is unnecessary to make allowance for his youth: he was but twenty-three when he died. Had he lived longer, it is true, his genius might have developed higher imaginative power, and experience might have given him more artistic resource. But the fact remains that in the fields of Scottish poetry which he essayed he has been surpassed only by two or three competitors. "Leith Races" and "Hallowfair" present pictures almost as racy and realistic, if indeed not so boisterous, as their great prototypes, King James's "Christ's Kirk on the Green" and "Peblis to the Play." The same pieces, with "The Election" and "The Sitting of the Session," afford the most graphic impression extant of the Edinburgh life of his day. His "Elegies," "Braid Claith," "Hame Content," and "Tron Kirk Bell" were masterpieces in a rich vein of satiric humour. And his "Gowdspink" and his "Farmer's Ingle" depicted fields of homely charm in which Fergusson has been improved upon only by Burns himself. The indebtedness of Burns to the Edinburgh poet, indeed, is hardly to be estimated. It is a well-known matter, and was generously acknowledged by Burns himself. The later singer borrowed not only countless expressions, suggestions, and turns of style

from his prototype; but whole pieces, and these amongst his best, such as "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "The Holy Fair," and "The Twa Brigs," remain avowedly little else than improvements on similar compositions by Fergusson.

The same commendation cannot be given to Fergusson's English poems, which comprise more than half his work. These are written for the most part in the affected and conventional taste of much of the Scoto-English verse of the time. But his pieces in the rich Lowland-Scottish dialect—pieces which were eagerly read by the common people everywhere in his own day—remain enough to furnish reputations for half a dozen poets.

ODE TO THE GOWDSPINK.

FRAE fields whare Spring her sweets has blawn,
Wi' cauler verdure owre the lawn,
The Gowdspink[1] comes, in new attire,
The brawest 'mang the whistling choir,
That, ere the sun can clear his een,
Wi' glib notes sain[2] the Simmer's green.
Sure Nature herried[3] mony a tree,
For sprains[4] and bonnie spats to thee;
Nae mair the rainbow can impart
Sic glowin' ferlies[5] o' her art,
Whase pencil wrought its freaks at will
On thee, the sey-piece[6] o' her skill.
Nae mair through straths in Simmer dight
We seek the rose to bless our sight;
Or bid the bonnie wa'-flowers sprout
On yonder ruin's lofty snout.
Thy shining garments far outstrip
The cherries upo' Hebe's lip,

[1] Goldfinch.
[2] bless.
[3] rifled.
[4] stripes.
[5] marvels.
[6] proof-piece, sample.

And fool the tints that Nature chose,
To busk and paint the crimson rose.
'Mang men, wae's heart! we aften find
The brawest dressed want peace o' mind;
While he that gangs wi' ragged coat
Is weel contented wi' his lot.
Whan wand wi' gluey birdlime's set,
To steal far off your dautit[1] mate,
Blithe wad you change your cleeding gay
In lieu of lav'rock's sober gray.
In vain, through woods, you sair may ban
The envious treachery o' man,
That, wi' your gowden glister ta'en,
Still haunts you on the Simmer's plain,
And traps you 'mang the sudden fa's,
O' Winter's dreary dreepin' snaws.
Now steekit[2] frae the gowany field,
Frae ilka fav'rite houff and bield[3];
But mergh[4], alas! to disengage
Your bonnie buik[5] frae fett'ring cage,
Your freeborn bosom beats in vain,
For darlin' liberty again.
In window hung, how aft we see
Thee keek[6] around at warblers free,
That carol saft, and sweetly sing
Wi' a' the blitheness o' the Spring?
Like Tantalus they hing you here
To spy the glories o' the year;
And, though you're at the burnie's brink,
They downa[7] suffer you to drink.
Ah, Liberty! thou bonnie dame,

1 cherished.
2 excluded.
3 haunt and shelter.
4 Without strength.
5 bulk.
6 peer.
7 cannot.

How wildly wanton is thy stream,
Round whilk the birdies a' rejoice,
And hail you wi' a gratefu' voice!
The Gowdspink chatters joyous here,
And courts wi' gleesome sangs his peer;
The mavis, frae the new-bloomed thorn,
Begins his lauds at earest morn;
And herd louns, louping owre the grass,
Need far less fleetching[1] to their lass,
Than paughty[2] damsels bred at courts,
Wha thraw their mou's and tak' the dorts[3];
But, reft of thee, fient flee[4] we care
For a' that life ahint can spare.
The Gowdspink, that sae lang has kenn'd
Thy happy sweets (thy wonted friend),
Her sad confinement ill can brook
In some dark chaumer's dowie nook;
Though Mary's hand his neb supplies,
Unkenn'd to hunger's painfu' cries.
Ev'n beauty canna cheer the heart
Frae life, frae liberty apart;
For now we tyne its wonted lay,
Sae lightsome sweet, sae blithely gay.
Thus Fortune aft a curse can gi'e
To wile us far frae liberty:
Then tent[5] her syren smiles wha list,
I'll ne'er envy your girnel's grist[6];
For whan fair Freedom smiles nae mair,
Care I for life? Shame fa' the hair[7]!
A field o'ergrown wi' rankest stubble,
The essence of a paltry bubble.

1 flattering.
2 saucy.
3 take the pet.
4 never a jot.
5 heed.
6 granary's mill-fee.
7 bit.

LEITH RACES.

In July month, ae bonnie morn,
Whan Nature's rokelay[1] green
Was spread owre ilka rig o' corn,
To charm our rovin' een;
Glow'ring about, I saw a quean
The fairest 'neath the lift:
Her een were o' the siller sheen;
Her skin, like snawy drift,
Sae white that day.

[1] a short cloak.

Quo' she, "I ferly unco sair[2],
That ye sould musand gae,
Ye wha ha'e sung o' Hallowfair,
Her winter's pranks, and play;
When on Leith sands the racers rare
Wi' jockey louns are met,
Their orrow[3] pennies there to ware,
And drown themsel's in debt
Fu' deep that day."

[2] marvel very greatly.

[3] odd, spare.

"And wha are ye, my winsome dear,
That tak's the gate[1] sae early?
Whare do ye win[2], gin ane may speer,
For I right meikle ferly
That sic braw buskit laughin' lass
Thir bonnie blinks should gi'e,
And loup, like Hebe, owre the grass,
As wanton and as free
Frae dule this day?"

[1] road.
[2] dwell.

"I dwall amang the cauler[3] springs
That weet the Land o' Cakes,
And aften tune my canty[4] strings
At bridals and late-wakes.
They ca' me Mirth:—I ne'er was kenned
To grumble or look sour;
But blithe wad be a lift to lend,
Gif ye wad sey[5] my power
And pith this day."

[3] fresh.
[4] pleasant.
[5] test, sample.

"A bargain be't; and, by my fegs!
Gif ye will be my mate,
Wi' you I'll screw the cheery pegs;
Ye shanna find me blate[6]:
We'll reel and ramble through the sands,
And jeer wi' a' we meet;
Nor hip[7] the daft and gleesome bands
That fill Edina's street
Sae thrang this day."

[6] bashful.
[7] miss.

Ere servant-maid had wont to rise
To seethe the breakfast kettle,
Ilk dame her brawest ribbons tries,
To put her on her mettle,
Wi' wiles some silly chiel to trap,
(And troth he's fain to get her;)
But she'll craw kniefly in his crap[1],
Whan, wow! he canna flit her
Frae hame that day.

1 "crow briskly in his stomach," *i.e.* be gaily recalled to his discredit.

Now, mony a scawed[2] and bare-arsed loun
Rise early to their wark;
Eneugh to fley[3] a meikle town,
Wi' dinsome squeal and bark:
"Here is the true and faithfu' list
O' noblemen and horses;
Their eild[4], their weight, their hight[5], their grist[6],
That rin for plates or purses
Fu' fleet this day."

2 pimply.
3 scare.
4 age.
5 name.
6 price.

To whisky plooks that brunt for ouks[7]
On town-guard sodgers' faces,
Their barber bauld his whittle crooks,
And scrapes them for the races.
Their stumps, erst used to filibegs,
Are dight in spatterdashes,
Whase barkent hides scarce fend their legs
Frae weet and weary plashes
O' dirt that day.

7 pimples that burned for weeks.

"Come, hafe a care," the Captain cries,
"On guns your bagnets thraw[1];
Now mind your manual exercise,
And marsh down raw by raw."
And, as they march, he'll glower about,
Tent a' their cuts and scars;
'Mang them fell mony a gaucy[2] snout
Has gusht in birth-day wars
Wi' bluid that day.

Her nainsel' maun be carefu' now,
Nor maun she be mislear'd[3],
Sin' baxter[4] lads ha'e sealed a vow
To skelp and clout[5] the guard.
I'm sure Auld Reekie kens o' nane
That would be sorry at it,
Though they should dearly pay the kane[6],
And get their tails weel sautit,
And sair, thir days.

The tinkler billies i' the Bow*
Are now less eident[7] clinkin';
As lang's their pith or siller dow[8],
They're daffin'[9], and they're drinkin'.
Bedown Leith Walk what burrachs[10] reel
O' ilka trade and station,
That gar their wives and childer feel
Toom wames[11], for their libation
O' drink thir days!

[1] bayonets twist.
[2] jolly.
[3] indiscreet.
[4] baker.
[5] whack and beat.
[6] petty levy.
[7] diligent.
[8] endure.
[9] making merry.
[10] confused crowds.
[11] empty bellies.

* The West Bow was the particular quarter of the Edinburgh metal-workers.

The browster wives thegither harl[1]
A' trash that they can fa' on;
They tak' the grounds o' ilka barrel,
To profit by the lawin'[2]:
For weel wat they, a skin leal het
For drinkin' needs nae hire:
At drumly gear they tak' nae pet;
Foul water slokens fire
And drouth thir days.

[1] draw.

[2] reckoning.

They say, ill ale has been the dead
O' mony a buirdly[3] loun;
Then dinna gape like gleds[4], wi' greed,
To sweel hale bickers[5] doun.
Gin Lord send mony ane the morn,
They'll ban fu' sair the time
That e'er they toutit aff[6] the horn
Which wambles[7] through their wame
Wi' pain that day.

[3] stalwart.

[4] kites.

[5] swill whole cupfuls.

[6] tipped out.

[7] undulates.

The Buchan bodies through the beach
Their bunch of Findrams[8] cry;
And skirl out bauld, in Norlan' speech,
"Guid speldings;—fa will buy?"
And, by my saul, they're nae wrang gear
To gust a stirrah's[9] mou';
Weel staw'd[10] wi' them, he'll never speer
The price o' being fu'
Wi' drink that day.

[8] speldings, dry smoked haddocks.

[9] to taste a young fellow's.

[10] stalled, surfeited.

Now wily wights at rowly powl[1],
And flingin' o' the dice,
Here brak' the banes o' mony a soul
Wi' fa's upo' the ice.
At first, the gate seems fair and straught;
Sae they ha'd fairly till her;
But wow! in spite o' a' their maught[2],
They're rookit[3] o' their siller
And gowd thir days.

[1] ninepins.
[2] might.
[3] cleared out.

Around whare'er you fling your een
The haiks[4], like wind, are scourin':
Some chaises honest folk contain,
And some ha'e mony a whore in.
Wi' rose and lily, red and white,
They gi'e themsel's sic fit airs;
Like Dian, they will seem perfite;
But it's nae gowd that glitters
Wi' them thir days.

[4] horses.

The Lion here, wi' open paw,
May cleek[5] in mony hunder,
Wha geck[6] at Scotland and her law,
His wily talons under.
For ken, though Jamie's laws are auld,
(Thanks to the wise recorder!)
His lion yet roars loud and bauld,
To ha'd the Whigs in order
Sae prime this day.

[5] hook.
[6] jibe.

To town-guard drum of clangour clear,
Baith men and steeds are rangit:
Some liveries red or yellow wear,
And some are tartan spraingit[1].
And now the red,—the blue e'en now,—
Bids fairest for the market;
But, ere the sport be done, I trow,
Their skins are gaily yarkit[2]
And peeled thir days.

[1] striped.
[2] beaten.

Siclike in Robin Hood debates,
When twa chiels ha'e a pingle[3];
E'en now, some coulie[4] gets his aits,
And dirt wi' words they mingle;
Till up loups he, wi' diction fu',
There's lang and dreich[5] contestin';
For now they're near the point in view,
Now ten miles frae the question
In hand that night.

[3] keen contest.
[4] fellow.
[5] dreary.

The races owre, they hale the dules[6]
Wi' drink o' a' kinkind;
Great feck[7] gae hirpling[8] hame, like fules;
The cripple lead the blind.
May ne'er the canker o' the drink
Mak' our bauld spirits thrawart[9],
'Case we get wharewitha' to wink
Wi' een as blue's a blawart[10]
Wi' straiks thir days!

[6] heal the pains.
[7] part.
[8] hobbling.
[9] cross-grained.
[10] blue-bottle flower, *centaurea cyanus.*

THE FARMER'S INGLE.

Et multo in primis hilarans convivia Baccho,
Ante focum, si frigus erit.—VIRG. BUC.

WHAN gloamin' grey out owre the welkin keeks;
Whan Bawtie[1] ca's his owsen to the byre;
Whan Thrasher John, sair dung[2], his barn-door steeks[3],
And histy[4] lasses at the dightin'[5] tire;
What bangs[6] fu' leal the e'ening's comin' cauld,
And gars snaw-tappit Winter freeze in vain;
Gars dowie[7] mortals look baith blithe and bauld,
Nor fley'd[8] wi' a' the poortith[9] o' the plain;
Begin, my Muse! and chant in hamely strain.

[1] the farm dog.
[2] much fatigued.
[3] shuts.
[4] dry, exhausted.
[5] dressing (of the corn).
[6] conquers.
[7] woeful.
[8] scared.
[9] poverty.

Frae the big stack, weel winnow't on the hill,
Wi' divots theekit[10] frae the weet and drift,
Sods, peats, and heathery turfs the chimley fill,
And gar their thick'ning smeek salute the lift.
The gudeman, new come hame, is blithe to find,
Whan he out owre the hallan[11] flings his een,
That ilka turn is handled to his mind,
That a' his housie looks sae cosh[12] and clean;
For cleanly house lo'es he, though e'er sae mean.

[10] thatched.
[11] partition between door and fire.
[12] neat, snug.

Weel kens the gudewife that the pleughs require
A heartsome meltith[1], and refreshin' synd[2]
O' nappy liquor, owre a bleezin' fire:
Sair wark and poortith downa weel be joined.
Wi' buttered bannocks now the girdle reeks,
I' the far nook the bowie[3] briskly reams[4];
The redded kail[5] stand by the chimley cheeks,
And haud the riggin'[6] het wi' welcome streams;
Whilk than the daintiest kitchen[7] nicer seems.

[1] meal. [2] wash down.
[3] bucket. [4] foams.
[5] prepared broth.
[6] roof-trees.
[7] anything, such as butter, eaten with bread.

Frae this lat gentler gabs[8] a lesson lear';
Wad they to labouring lend an eident[9] hand,
They'd rax fell strang[10] upon the simplest fare,
Nor find their stamacks ever at a stand.
Fu' hale and healthy wad they pass the day;
At night, in calmest slumbers dose fu' sound;
Nor doctor need their weary life to spae[11],
Nor drogs their noddle and their sense confound,
Till death slip sleely on, and gi'e the hindmost wound.

[8] mouths.
[9] diligent.
[10] wax mighty strong.
[11] predict.

On siccan[12] food has mony a doughty deed
By Caledonia's ancestors been done;
By this did mony wight fu' weirlike[13] bleed
In bruilzies[14] frae the dawn to set o' sun.
'Twas this that braced their gardies[15] stiff and strang;
That bent the deadly yew in ancient days;
Laid Denmark's daring sons on yird[16] alang;
Gar'd Scottish thristles bang the Roman bays;
For near our crest their heads they doughtna raise.

[12] suchlike.
[13] warlike.
[14] broils, battles.
[15] arms.
[16] earth.

The couthy cracks[1] begin whan supper's owre;
The cheering bicker gars them glibly gash[2]
O' Simmer's showery blinks, and Winters sour,
Whase floods did erst their mailin's[3] produce hash.
'Bout kirk and market eke their tales gae on;
How Jock wooed Jenny here to be his bride;
And there, how Marion, for a bastard son,
Upo' the cutty-stool was forced to ride,
The waefu' scauld o' our Mess John to bide.

The fient a cheep's[4] amang the bairnies now;
For a' their anger's wi' their hunger gane;
Aye maun the childer, wi' a fastin' mou',
Grumble, and greet, and mak' an unco maen.
In rangles[5] round before the ingle's lowe[6],
Frae gude-dame's[7] mouth auld-warld tales they hear,
O' warlocks loupin' round the wirrikow[8];
O' ghaists that win in glen and kirkyard drear,
Whilk touzles[9] a' their tap, and gars them shake wi' fear!

For weel she trows that fiends and fairies be
Sent frae the de'il to fleetch[10] us to our ill;
That kye ha'e tint[11] their milk wi' evil e'e;
And corn been scowdered[12] on the glowin' kiln.
Oh, mock na this, my friends! but rather mourn,
Ye in life's brawest spring wi' reason clear;
Wi' eild[13] our idle fancies a' return,
And dim our dolefu' day's wi' bairnly fear;
The mind's aye cradled whan the grave is near.

[1] familiar talk.
[2] talk on.
[3] farm's.
[4] Never a chirp's.
[5] heaps.
[6] fire's flame.
[7] grandmother's.
[8] scarecrow, goblin.
[9] dishevels.
[10] flatter.
[11] lost.
[12] scorched.
[13] age.

Yet thrift, industrious, bides her latest days;
Though age her sair-dow'd[1] front wi' runcles[2] wave,
Yet frae the russet lap the spindle plays,
Her e'enin' stent[3] reels she as weel's the lave.
On some feast-day the wee things, buskit braw,
Shall heeze[4] her heart up wi' a silent joy,
Fu' cadgie[5] that her head was up, and saw
Her ain spun cleedin'[6] on a darlin' oy[7];
Careless though death should mak' the feast her foy.

[1] sorely faded.
[2] wrinkles
[3] task.
[4] lift.
[5] cheerful.
[6] clothing.
[7] grandson.

In its auld lerroch[8] yet the deas[9] remains,
Whare the gudeman aft streiks[10] him at his ease;
A warm and canny lean for weary banes
O' lab'rers doiled[11] upon the wintry leas.
Round him will baudrins[12] and the colley come,
To wag their tail, and cast a thankfu' e'e
To him wha kindly flings them mony a crumb
O' kebbuck whang'd[13], and dainty fadge to prie[14];
This a' the boon they crave, and a' the fee.

[8] place.
[9] settle.
[10] stretches.
[11] stupefied with fatigue.
[12] pussy.
[13] cheese cut in lumps.
[14] bannock to taste.

Frae him the lads their mornin' counsel tak';
What stacks he wants to thrash, what rigs to till;
How big a birn[15] maun lie on Bassie's[16] back,
For meal and mu'ter to the thirlin' mill.*

[15] burden.
[16] old horse.

* In feudal times every owner of a barony was bound to build a meal mill upon his lands. To this mill all the tenants of the barony were "thirled." That is, they were bound to send their corn there to be ground at certain rates. Whether they did so or not, the multures, or payments in kind, had to be made.

Niest, the gudewife her hirelin' damsels bids
Glower through the byre, and see the hawkies[1] bound;
Tak' tent, 'case Crummy tak' her wonted tids[2],
And ca' the leglin's[3] treasure on the ground,
Whilk spills a kebbuck nice, or yellow pound.

[1] cows.
[2] humours.
[3] milking-pail.

Then a' the house for sleep begin to grien[4],
Their joints to slack frae industry a while;
The leaden god fa's heavy on their een,
And haflins steeks[5] them frae their daily toil;
The cruizie[6] too can only blink and bleer;
The restit ingle's[7] done the maist it dow[8];
Tacksman[9] and cotter eke to bed maun steer,
Upo' the cod[10] to clear their drumly pow[11],
Till waukened by the dawnin's ruddy glow.

[4] yearn.
[5] partly shuts.
[6] open saucer lamp.
[7] The smoke-dried fire-side's.
[8] can.
[9] farmer.
[10] pillow.
[11] unclear head.

Peace to the husbandman and a' his tribe,
Whase care fells a' our wants frae year to year!
Lang may his sock and cou'ter turn the glybe,
And bauks[12] o' corn bend down wi' laded ear!
May Scotia's simmers ay look gay and green;
Her yellow har'sts frae scowry[13] blasts decreed!
May a' her tenants sit fu' snug and bien[14],
Frae the hard grip o' ails and poortith freed;
And a lang lasting train o' peacefu' hours succeed!

[12] ridges.
[13] showery.
[14] comfortable.

THE SITTING OF THE SESSION.

PHOEBUS, sair cowed wi' Simmer's height,
Couers near the yird[1] wi' blinkin' light;
Cauld shaw the haughs, nae mair bedight
Wi' Simmer's claes,
Which heeze[2] the heart o' dowie wight
That through them gaes.

[1] earth.

[2] uplift.

Weel lo'es me o' you, Business! now;
For ye'll weet mony a drouthy mou',
That's lang a eisnin'[3] gane for you,
Withouten fill
O' dribbles frae the gude brown cow,
Or Highland gill.

[3] yearning.

The Court o' Session, weel wat I,
Pits ilk chiel's whittle i' the pie;
Can creesh[4] the slaw-gaun wheels whan dry,
Till Session's done;
Though they'll gi'e mony a cheep and cry
Or twalt o' June.

[4] grease.

Ye benders[1] a' that dwall in joot[2],
You'll tak' your liquour clean cap out,
Synd your mouse-webs[3] wi' reamin' stout,
While ye ha'e cash,
And gar your cares a' tak' the rout,
And thumb ne'er fash[4].

[1] hard drinkers.
[2] tipple.
[3] throat-phlegm, *lit.* gossamer.
[4] trouble.

Rob Gibb's gray giz[5], new frizzled fine,
Will white as ony snaw-ba' shine;
Weel does he lo'e the lawin' coin
Whan dossied down[6],
For whisky gills, or dribs o' wine,
In cauld forenoon.

[5] countenance.
[6] tabled.

Bar-keepers now, at outer door,
Tak' tent as folk gang back and fore;
The fient ane there but pays his score;
Nane wins toil free;
Though ye've a cause the House before,
Or agent be.

Gin ony here wi' canker knocks,
And has na loused his siller pocks,
Ye needna think to fleetch[7] or coax;—
"Come, shaw's your gear:—
Ae scabbit ewe spoils twenty flocks:—
Ye's nae be here."

[7] flatter.

Now, at the door, they'll raise a plea:—
Crack on, my lads! for flyting's[1] free;
For gin ye should tongue-tackit[2] be,
The mair's the pity,
When scauldin' but and ben we see,
Pendente lite.

[1] scolding.
[2] tongue-tied.

The lawyers' skelfs, and printers' presses,
Graen unco sair wi' weighty cases;
The clerk in toil his pleasure places,
To thrive bedeen[3];
At five hours bell scribes shaw their faces,
And rake their een[4].

[3] forthwith.
[4] rub the rheum from their eyes.

The country folk to lawyers crook:
"Ah, weel's me o' your bonnie buik!
The benmost part o' my kist nook
I'll ripe[5] for thee,
And willing ware[6] my hindmost rook[7]
For my decree."

[5] search, rifle.
[6] spend.
[7] possession.

But Law's a draw-well unco deep,
Withouten rim folk out to keep;
A donnart[8] chiel, whan drunk, may dreep
Fu' sleely in,
But finds the gate[9] baith stey[10] and steep
Ere out he win.

[8] stupified.
[9] way.
[10] toilsome.

BRAID CLAITH.

YE wha are fain to ha'e your name
Wrote i' the bonnie book o' Fame,
Let merit nae pretension claim
To laurelled wreath,
But hap ye weel, baith back and wame,
In gude Braid Claith.

He that some ells o' this may fa',
Wi' slae-black hat on pow like snaw,
Bids bauld to bear the gree[1] awa,
Wi' a' his graith[2],
Whan bienly[3] clad wi' shell fu' braw
O' gude Braid Claith.

[1] preference, rank.
[2] clothing.
[3] comfortably.

Waesuck[4] for him wha has nae feck[5] o't!
For he's a gowk[6] they're sure to geck[7] at;
A chiel that ne'er will be respeckit
While he draws breath,
Till his four quarters are bedeckit
Wi' gude Braid Claith.

[4] Alas.
[5] quantity.
[6] fool.
[7] jibe.

On Sabbath-days the barber spark,
Whan he has done wi' scrapin' wark,
Wi' siller broochie in his sark,
Gangs trigly[1], faith!
Or to the Meadow, or the Park,
In gude Braid Claith.

[1] smartly

Weel might ye trow, to see them there,
That they to shave your haffits[2] bare,
Or curl and sleek a pickle[3] hair,
Would be right laith,
Whan pacin' wi' a gaucy[4] air
In gude Braid Claith.

[2] cheeks.
[3] small quantity of.
[4] portly.

If ony mettled stirrah grien[5]
For favour frae a lady's een,
He maunna care for bein' seen
Before he sheath
His body in a scabbard clean
O' gude Braid Claith.

[5] young fellow yearn.

For, gin he come wi' coat thread-bare,
A feg for him she winna care,
But crook her bonnie mou' fu' sair,
And scauld him baith;
Wooers should aye their travel spare,
Without Braid Claith.

Braid Claith lends folk an unco heeze[1];
Mak's mony kailworms butterflees;
Gi'es mony a doctor his degrees,
For little skaith;
In short, you may be what you please,
Wi' gude Braid Claith.

For, though ye had as wise a snout on,
As Shakspeare or Sir Isaac Newton,
Your judgment folk would ha'e a doubt on,
I'll tak' my aith,
Till they could see ye wi' a suit on
O' gude Braid Claith.

[1] hoist.

THE DAFT DAYS.*

Now mirk December's dowie face
Glowers o'er the rigs wi' sour grimace,
While, through his minimum o' space,
The bleer-e'ed sun,
Wi' blinkin' light, and stealing pace,
His race doth run.

Frae naked groves nae birdie sings,
To shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings,
The breeze nae od'rous flavour brings,
Frae Borean cave,
And dwinin'[1] Nature droops her wings,
Wi' visage grave.

[1] pining, dwindling.

Mankind but scanty pleasure glean
Frae snawy hill or barren plain,
Whan Winter, 'midst his nippin' train,
Wi' frozen spear,
Sends drift ower a' his bleak domain,
And guides the weir[2].

[2] war.

* Christmas holiday time.

Auld Reikie[1]! thou'rt the canty hole;
A bield[2] for mony a cauldrife[3] soul,
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,
Baith warm and couth[4];
While round they gar the bicker roll,
To weet their mouth.

[1] Edinburgh, *lit.* Smokey.
[2] shelter.
[3] chilly.
[4] comfortable, familiar.

Whan merry Yule-day comes, I trow,
You'll scantlins[5] find a hungry mou';
Sma' are our cares, our stamacks fu'
O' gusty[6] gear,
And kickshaws[7], strangers to our view,
Sin' fairnyear[8].

[5] scarcely
[6] tasty.
[7] *quelques-choses.*
[8] last year.

Ye browster wives! now busk ye braw,
And fling your sorrows far awa';
Then, come an' gi'e's the tither blaw
O' reaming ale,
Mair precious than the Well o' Spa,
Our hearts to heal.

Then, though at odds wi' a' the warl',
Amang oursels we'll never quarrel;
Though Discord gi'e a cankered snarl,
To spoil our glee,
As lang's there's pith into the barrel,
We'll drink and 'gree.

Fiddlers! your pins in temper fix,
And roset weel your fiddlesticks;
But banish vile Italian tricks
Frae out our quorum;
Nor fortes wi' pianos mix:—
Gi'e's Tullochgorum.

For nought can cheer the heart sae weel,
As can a canty Highland reel;
It even vivifies the heel
To skip and dance:
Lifeless is he wha canna feel
Its influence.

Let mirth abound; let social cheer
Invest the dawnin' o' the year;
Let blithesome Innocence appear,
To crown our joy;
Nor Envy, wi' sarcastic sneer,
Our bliss destroy.

And thou, great god o' Aquavitae!
Wha sway'st the empire o' this city;
Whan fu', we're sometimes capernoity[1];
Be thou prepared
To hedge us frae that black banditti,
The city guard.

[1] irritable, peevish.

JOHN DUNLOP.

1755-1820.

A sweet singer who was also a successful merchant, John Dunlop was born at Carmyle House, his father's residence, in the parish of Old Monkland, near Glasgow. A typical Glasgow citizen, social and hospitable, he took much pleasure in listening to Scottish songs, and could sing them himself to good effect. He was author of a considerable quantity of verse—two volumes of which he printed privately (only ten copies) in 1817-1819—and is said to have left four manuscript volumes of poetry. He was chosen Lord Provost of Glasgow in 1796, and was Collector of Customs at Port-Glasgow when he died. His son, who was Sheriff of Renfrewshire, and who is remembered as the author of a *History of Fiction*, printed privately a further small collection of Dunlop's pieces (fifty copies) in 1836. Four of Dunlop's songs were included in "The Modern Scottish Minstrel" of Dr. C. Rogers in 1857.

OH! DINNA ASK ME GIN I LO'E THEE.

Oh! dinna ask me gin I lo'e thee,—
Troth, I dar'na tell:
Dinna ask me gin I lo'e ye—
Ask it o' yoursel'.

Oh! dinna look sae sair at me,
For weel ye ken me true:
Oh, gin ye look sae sair at me,
I dar'na look at you!

When ye gang to yon braw, braw toun,
And bonnier lassies see,
Oh, dinna, Jamie, look at them,
Lest you should mind na me!

For I could never bide the lass
That ye'd lo'e mair than me;
And oh, I'm sure my heart would break
Gin ye'd prove false to me!

THE YEAR THAT'S AWA'.

HERE'S to the year that's awa'!
We will drink it in strong and in sma';
And here's to ilk bonnie young lassie we lo'ed,
While swift flew the year that's awa'.
And here's to ilk, etc.

Here's to the sodger who bled,
And the sailor who bravely did fa';
Their fame is alive though their spirits are fled
On the wings of the year that's awa'.
Their fame is alive, etc.

Here's to the friends we can trust
When the storms of adversity blaw;
May they live in our song and be nearest our hearts,
Nor depart like the year that's awa'.
May they live, etc.

MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN.

1755-1838.

Anne M'Vicar, the daughter of an officer in a Highland regiment, was descended on the mother's side from the Stewarts of Invernahyle in Argyleshire. Shortly after her birth at Glasgow her father's regiment was ordered to the British colonies in America, where it took part in the conquest of Canada. Some years later, M'Vicar resigned his commission, and acquired a considerable estate in Vermont. Compelled by ill-health, however, to return to Scotland in 1768, he was deprived of his estate by the breaking out of the revolutionary war, and was reduced to depend on an appointment as barrack-master at Fort Augustus in Glen More. There in 1779 Miss M'Vicar was married to the Rev. James Grant, the military chaplain, who was related to some of the best families in Badenoch. On his marriage, Grant accepted the parish of Laggan near Fort Augustus, and there he remained incumbent for twenty-two years.

On her husband's death in 1801, Mrs. Grant found herself considerably in debt, and with eight surviving children dependent on her. The energy, however, which had induced her to fit herself for the position of wife of a Highland minister by learning Gaelic, now came to her aid, and she took a farm. Presently the publication of a volume of poems enabled her to clear off her debts, and, removing first to Stirling, and afterwards to Edinburgh, she devoted herself entirely to literature. In 1806 she published, under the title of "Letters from the Mountains," a collection of the letters which she had written to friends from the manse of Laggan. This brought her considerable reputation, and was followed by "Memoirs of an American Lady," "Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders," and other works. In 1825 she received a pension of £100, which, with several legacies from friends, and the profits of her pen, secured her a modest independence. In Edinburgh her house became one of the chief resorts of men of letters like Lord Jeffrey, Henry Mackenzie, and Sir Walter Scott, among whom she was famous both for her literary accomplishment and for the brilliance of her conversation. For a time, indeed, owing to her knowledge of Highland character, custom, and legend, and her power of depicting them, she was thought to be the author of "Waverley" and "Rob Roy."

"O WHERE, TELL ME WHERE."

"O WHERE, tell me where, is your Highland laddie gone?
O where, tell me where, is your Highland laddie gone?"
"He's gone, with streaming banners, where noble deeds are done;
And my sad heart will tremble till he comes safely home."

"O where, tell me where, did your Highland laddie stay?
"O where, tell me where, did your Highland laddie stay?"
"He dwelt beneath the holly trees, beside the rapid Spey;
And many a blessing followed him the day he went away."

"O what, tell me what, does your Highland laddie wear?
O what, tell me what, does your Highland laddie wear?"
"A bonnet with a lofty plume, the gallant badge of war,
And a plaid across the manly breast that yet shall wear a star."

"Suppose, ah! suppose, that some cruel, cruel wound
Should pierce your Highland laddie and all your hopes confound!"
The pipes would play a cheering march, the banners round him fly;
The spirit of a Highland chief would lighten in his eye.

"But I will hope to see him yet, in Scotland's bonnie bounds;
But I will hope to see him yet, in Scotland's bonnie bounds.
His native land of liberty shall nurse his glorious wounds,
While wide, through all our Highland hills his war-like name resounds."

COULD I FIND A BONNIE GLEN.

Could I find a bonnie glen,
Warm and calm, warm and calm:
Could I find a bonnie glen,
Warm and calm;
Free frae din, and far frae men,
There my wanton kids I'd pen,
Where woodbines shade some den,
Breathing balm, breathing balm;
Where woodbines shade some den,
Breathing balm.

Where the steep and woody hill
Shields the deer, shields the deer;
Where the steep and woody hill
Shields the deer;
Where the woodlark, singing shrill,
Guards his nest beside the rill,
And the thrush, with tawny bill,
Warbles clear, warbles clear;
Where the thrush, with tawny bill,
Warbles clear.

Where the dashing waterfall
Echoes round, echoes round;
Where the dashing waterfall
Echoes round;
And the rustling aspen tall,
And the owl, at evening's call,
Plaining from the ivied wall,
Joins the sound, joins the sound;
Plaining from the ivied wall,
Joins the sound.

There my only love I'd own,
All unseen, all unseen;
There my only love I'd own,
All unseen;
There I'd live for her alone,
To the restless world unknown,
And my heart should be the throne
For my queen, for my queen;
And my heart should be the throne
For my queen!

JEAN GLOVER.

1758-1801.

"O'er the Muir amang the Heather" was taken down by Burns from the singing of its author, a girl to whom he assigns no very delectable character, "as she was strolling through the country with a sleight-of-hand blackguard." All besides that is known of Jean Glover is contained in *The Ayrshire Contemporaries of Burns*. She was the daughter, it appears, of respectable parents, and was born at the Townhead of Kilmarnock. Having witnessed some performances of strolling players who visited the town, she was seized with the glamour of the stage, and eloped with one of the "heroes of the sock and buskin." From that time forth her life may or may not have justified all that Burns said of it. When she visited Muirkirk in 1795, she performed for a few nights in company with the "sleight-of-hand blackguard," whose name was Richard, in the chief room of a public-house called the Black Bottle; and the warmth of her disposition is shown by the fact that on that occasion she presented her brother, who had settled in Muirkirk, with a cheese and a boll of meal. She was described by persons who saw her then as still strikingly handsome. An old woman, also, who remembered seeing her at a fair in Irvine, spoke of her as gaily attired, and playing on a tambourine at the mouth of a close in which was the exhibition room of her husband the conjurer. "Weel do I remember her," this witness added, "and thocht her the bravest woman I had ever seen step in leather shoon." She also sometimes visited her native town, where she sang in a place of entertainment known as the Croft Lodge. Her favourite song, for the singing of which it appears she was famous, was "Green grow the rashes." The last that was seen of her was at Letterkenny in Ireland. A native of Kilmarnock who was there with his regiment, recognised her, introduced himself, and "had the *honour* of her company over a social glass." She was then in good health and high spirits; but before the soldier left the place, two months later, he learned that she was dead.

O'ER THE MUIR AMANG THE HEATHER.

Coming through the Craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie blooming heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her ewes thegither.

O'er the muir amang the heather,
O'er the muir amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her ewes thegither.

Says I, "My dear, where is thy hame?
In muir or dale, pray tell me whether?"
Says she, "I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the blooming heather."

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunny was the weather;
She left her flocks at large to rove
Amang the bonnie blooming heather.

While thus we lay she sung a sang,
  Till echo rang a mile and farther;
And aye the burden o' the sang
  Was "O'er the muir amang the heather."

She charmed my heart, and aye sinsyne
  I couldna think on ony ither:
By sea and sky she shall be mine,
  The bonnie lass amang the heather!

O'er the muir amang the heather,
Down amang the blooming heather:—
By sea and sky she shall be mine,
The bonnie lass amang the heather!

JOHN PINKERTON.

1758-1826.

Though Pinkerton is remembered as an antiquarian and historian, his fame has suffered from his peccadilloes as a writer of poetry. While extremely severe on others who ventured upon anything like literary deception, he was himself unable to resist the temptation of foisting some of his own compositions upon the public as antique. Thus in his *Scottish Tragic Ballads* in 1781 he printed a second part of "Hardyknute," for which he stated that he was "indebted to the memory of a lady in Lanarkshire," but which, later, in his *Select Scottish Ballads* and *Ancient Scottish Poems* he acknowledged to be his own composition. In the same way, in his *Select Scottish Ballads*, he printed the stanzas which follow as the old words of the beautiful and ancient air of "Bothwell Bank." The song when stripped of its pseudo-antique orthography stands confessedly modern. Both disguised in his antiquarian collections, and confessedly in his own *Rimes* and other volumes, he published a good deal of fair original poetry.

BOTHWELL BANK.

On the blithe Beltane, as I went
By mysel' out o'er the green bent,
Whereby the crystal waves of Clyde
Through saughs[1] and hanging hazels glide,
There, sadly sitting on a brae,
I heard a damsel speak her wae.

[1] willows.

"O Bothwell bank, thou bloomest fair,
But ah! thou mak'st my heart fu' sair!
For a' beneath thy holts[1] sae green
My love and I wad sit at e'en,
While primroses and daisies, mixed
Wi' blue-bells, in my locks he fixed.

"But he left me ae dreary day,
And haply now sleeps in the clay,
Without ae sigh his death to rune,
Without ae flower his grave to croun.
O Bothwell bank, thou bloomest fair,
But ah! thou mak'st my heart fu' sair."

[1] woods.

JOHN MAYNE.

1759-1836.

A native of Dumfries, and in youth a compositor's apprentice under the celebrated Foulises of Glasgow, John Mayne was for the greater part of his life connected, as printer and part proprietor, with the "Star" newspaper in London. His principal poem "The Siller Gun" celebrates a relic of ancient Wapinschawing surviving in his time at Dumfries—the competition for a trophy presented by James VI. After appearing in part on a broadsheet in 1777, and in *Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine* in 1780, it was printed in a final edition of five cantos, with the author's revision, by Cadell in 1836. As a description, vivid and terse, of a rustic festival, "The Siller Gun" is no unworthy example of the vein of Scots poetry represented by James V.'s "Christ's Kirk on the Green" and Fergusson's "Leith Races." It was highly praised by Sir Walter Scott and by Lord Woodhouselee. Another considerable poem by Mayne, entitled "Glasgow," was published in 1803. His verses on "Hallowe'en" appeared first in *Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine* for November, 1780, and were included in an edition of "The Siller Gun" in 1783; while "The King's Welcome Home," one of the poetic eulogies which hailed the northern visit of George IV. in 1822, was printed in the edition of 1836.

But perhaps Mayne's most famous composition is the song of "Logan Braes." The tune of "Logan Water" to which the words are set, is said to be as old, at least, as the latter end of the seventeenth century, and was formerly attached to a somewhat indelicate ditty, beginning—

> "Ae simmer night on Logan Braes,
> I helped a lassie on wi' her claes,
> First wi' her stockings,"—&c.

The two first stanzas of Mayne's composition, written and sung at Glasgow in 1781, were printed in the "Star" newspaper, May 23, 1789. Four additional stanzas appeared in the *Pocket Encyclopædia of Songs* (Glasgow, 1816), but were probably not all Mayne's. His own final edition of the song, consisting of three stanzas, he printed in the preface to his "Siller Gun" in 1836. Four years after the first appearance of Mayne's song, Burns, who had heard the tune and the refrain, adopted the latter as a fragment of an old song, and wrote to it his well-known stanzas of "Logan Water."

THE SILLER GUN.

OPENING DESCRIPTION.

For loyal feats and trophies won
Dumfries shall live till time be done!
Ae simmer's morning, wi' the sun,
The Seven Trades there
Foregathered, for their Siller Gun
To shoot ance mair.

To shoot ance mair in grand array,
And celebrate the king's birthday,
Crowds, happy in the gentle sway
Of ane sae dear,
Were proud their fealty to display,
And marshal here.

[1] pick.

O George! the wale[1] o' kings and men!
For thee in daily prayer we bend:
With ilka blessing Heaven can send
May'st thou be crowned!
And may thy race our rights defend
The world around!

For weeks before this fête sae clever,
The folk were in a perfect fever,
Scouring gun-barrels in the river—
At marks practising—
Marching wi' drums and fifes for ever—
A' sodgerizin'.

And turning coats and mending breeks,
New-seating where the sark-tail keeks;
(Nae matter though the clout that ekes
Be black or blue);
And darning, with a thousand steeks,
The hose anew.

Between the last and this occasion,
Lang, unco lang, seemed the vacation
To him wha wooes sweet recreation
In Nature's prime;
And him wha likes a day's potation
At ony time.

The lift[1] was clear, the morn serene, [1] sky.
The sun just glinting ower the scene,
When James M'Noe began again
To beat to arms,
Rousing the heart o' man and wean
Wi' war's alarms.

Frae far and near, the country lads,
(Their joes ahint them on their yads[1]),
Flocked in to see the show in squads;
And, what was dafter,
Their pawkie mithers and their dads
Cam' trotting after.

[1] mares.

And mony a beau and belle were there,
Doited wi' dosing in a chair,
For, lest they'd, sleeping, spoil their hair,
Or miss the sight,
The gowks, like bairns before a fair,
Sat up a' night.

Wi' hats as black as ony raven,
Fresh as the rose, their beards new shaven,
And a' their Sunday's cleeding[2] having
Sae trim and gay,
Forth cam' our Trades, some orra[3] saving
To ware[4] that day.

[2] clothing.
[3] extra.
[4] spend.

Fair fa' ilk canny caidgy[5] carl,
Weel may he bruik[6] his new apparel,
And never dree[7] the bitter snarl
O' scowling wife!
But, blest in pantry, barn, and barrel,
Be blithe through life.

[5] wanton.
[6] enjoy.
[7] suffer.

Hech, sirs! what crowds cam' into town
To see them must'ring up and down!
Lasses and lads, sunburnt and brown—
Women and weans,
Gentle and simple, mingling, crown
The gladsome scenes.

At first, forenent ilk deacon's hallan[1]
His ain brigade was made to fall in;
And while the muster-roll was calling,
And joy-bells jowing[2],
Het pints, weel spiced, to keep the saul in,
Around were flowing.

[1] inner wall half crossing house between door and hearth.

[2] rocking, tolling.

Broiled kipper, cheese and bread, and ham,
Laid the foundation for a dram
O' whiskey, gin frae Rotterdam,
Or cherry-brandy,
Whilk after, a' was fish that cam'
To Jock or Sandy.

O! weel ken they wha lo'e their chapin[3],
Drink mak's the auldest swak[4] and strappin',
Gars care forget the ills that happen—
The blate[5] look spruce,
And ev'n the thowless[6] cock their tappin'[7]
And craw fu' crouse[8].

[3] quart.

[4] stout.

[5] backward.

[6] pithless.

[7] top-knot (head).

[8] boldly.

The muster ower, the different bands
File aff in parties to the sands,
Where, 'mid loud laughs and clapping hands,
Gley'd[1] Geordie Smith
Reviews them, and their line expands
Alang the Nith.

[1] squint-eyed.

But ne'er, for uniform or air,
Was sic a group reviewed elsewhere:
The short, the tall, fat folk, and spare,
Syde[2] coats and dockit,
Wigs, queus, and clubs, and curly hair,
Round hats, and cockit.

[2] long.

As to their guns—thae fell ingines,
Borrowed or begged, were of a' kinds,
For bluidy war, or bad designs,
Or shooting cushies[3]—
Lang fowling-pieces, carabines,
And blunderbusses.

[3] wood-pigeons.

Maist feck[4], though oiled to mak' them glimmer,
Hadna been shot for mony a simmer,
And Fame, the story-telling kimmer[5],
Jocosely hints
That some o' them had bits o' timmer
Instead o' flints.

[4] part.

[5] comrade.

Some guns, she thrieps[1], within her ken, [1] insists.
Were spiked, to let nae priming ben;
And, as in twenty there were ten
Worm-eaten stocks,
Sae, here and there, a rosit-end
Held on their locks.

And then, to show what diff'rence stands
Atween the leaders and their bands,
Swords that, unsheathed since Prestonpans,
Neglected lay,
Were furbished up, to grace the hands
O' chiefs, this day.

"Ohon!" says George, and gae a grane,
"The age o' chivalry is gane!"
Syne, having ower and ower again
The hale surveyed,
Their route and a' things else made plain,
He snuffed, and said:

"Now gentlemen! now mind the motion,
And dinna this time mak' a botion[2]; [2] abortion.
Shouther your arms!—O! haud them tosh[3] on, [3] trim.
And not athraw[4]! [4] awry.
Wheel wi' your left hands to the ocean,
And march awa'."

Wi' that the dinlin'[1] drums rebound,
Fifes, clarionets, and hautboys sound;
Through crowds on crowds, collected round,
The Corporations
Trudge aff, while Echo's self is drowned
In acclamations.

[1] vibrating.

Their steps to martial airs agreeing,
And a' the Seven Trades' colours fleeing,
Bent for the Craigs, O! weel worth seeing!
They hied awa';
Their bauld convener proud o' being
The chief ower a'.

Attended by his body guard,
He stepped in gracefu'ness unpaired,
Straught as the poplar on the swaird,
And strong as Samson;
Nae e'e could look without regard
On Robin Tamson.

His craft, the Hammermen fu' braw,
Led the procession, twa and twa;
The leddies waved their napkins a',
And boys huzzay'd,
As onward to the waponschaw[2]
They stately strade.

[2] weapon-show.

Close to the Hammermen, behold,
The Squaremen come, like chiefs of old;
The Weavers, syne, their flags unfold;
And after them
The Tailors walk, erect and bold,
Intent on fame.

The Sutors, o' King Crispin vain,
March next in turn to the campaign;
And, while the crowd applauds again,
See, too, the Tanners
Extending far the glitt'ring train
O' guns and banners.

The Fleshers, on this joyous day,
Bring up the rearward in array.
Enarmed they mak' a grand display—
A' jolly chiels,
Able, in ony desperate fray,
To fecht like deils.

The journeymen were a' sae gaucy[1],
Th' apprentices sae kir[2] and saucy,
That, as they gaed alang the causey,
Ahint them a',
Th' applauding heart o' mony a lassie
Was stown awa'.

[1] portly.
[2] cheerful.

THE WINTER SAT LANG.

THE winter sat lang on the spring o' the year,
Our seedtime was late, and our mailin[1] was dear;
My mither tint[2] her heart when she looked on us a',
And we thought upon them that were far'est awa',
O! were they but here that are far'est awa'!
O! were they but here that are dear to us a'!
Our cares would seem light and our sorrows but sma'
If they were but here that are far frae us a'!

[1] farm.
[2] lost.

Last week when our hopes were o'erclouded wi' fear,
And nae ane at hame the dull prospect to cheer,
Our Johnnie has written frae far awa' parts
A letter that lightens and hauds up our hearts.
He says, "My dear mither, though I be awa',
In love and affection I'm still wi' ye a';
While I ha'e a being ye'se aye ha'e a ha',
Wi' plenty to keep out the frost and the snaw."

My mither, o'erjoyed at the change in her state,
By the bairn that she doted on early and late,
Gi'es thanks night and day, to the Giver of a',
There's been naething unworthy o' him that's awa'.
Then here is to them that are far frae us a'—
The friend that ne'er failed us though far'est awa'!
Health, peace, and prosperity wait on us a'!
And a blithe comin' hame to the friend that's awa'.

LOGAN BRAES.

By Logan's streams that rin sae deep
Fu' aft, wi' glee, I've herded sheep—
I've herded sheep, or gathered slaes
Wi' my dear lad on Logan Braes.
But wae's my heart, thae days are gane,
And fu' o' grief, I herd my lane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes.

Nae mair, at Logan Kirk, will he,
Atween the preachings, meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or, when it's mirk,
Convoy me hame frae Logan Kirk.
I weel may sing, thae days are gane;
Frae kirk and fair I come alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes.

At e'en, when hope amaist is gane,
I dander dowie and forlane[1],
Or sit beneath the trysting tree,
Where first he spak' o' love to me.
O! could I see thae days again,
My lover skaithless and my ain,
Revered by friends, and far frae faes,
We'd live in bliss on Logan Braes.

[1] saunter sad and forlorn.

HALLOWE'EN.*

Of a' the festivals we hear,
Frae Handsel-Monday[1] till New-Year,
There's few in Scotland held mair dear
For mirth, I ween,
Or yet can boast o' better cheer,
Than Hallowe'en.

[1] first Monday of New-Year (old style).

Langsyne indeed, as now in climes
Where priests for siller pardon crimes,
The kintry 'round in Popish rhymes
Did pray and graen;
But customs vary wi' the times
At Hallowe'en.

Ranged round a bleezing ingleside,
Where nowther cauld nor hunger bide,
The farmer's house, wi' secret pride,
Will a' convene;
For that day's wark is thrawn aside
At Hallowe'en.

* Mayne's poem is believed to have suggested to Burns both the subject and style of one of his happiest compositions. It does not appear to have been printed since 1783, and is now extremely scarce.

Placed at their head the gudewife sits,
And deals round apples, pears, and nits;
Syne tells her guests, how, at sic bits
Where she has been,
Bogle's ha'e gart folk tyne their wits
At Hallowe'en.

Grieved, she recounts how, by mischance,
Puir pussy's forced a' night to prance
Wi' fairies, wha in thousands dance
Upon the green,
Or sail wi' witches ower to France
At Hallowe'en.

Syne, issued frae the gardy-chair[1], [1] armchair.
For that's the seat of empire there,
To co'er the table wi' what's rare,
Commands are gi'en;
That a' fu' daintily may fare
At Hallowe'en.

And when they've toomed[2] ilk heapit plate, [2] emptied.
And a' things are laid out o' gate[3], [3] way.
To ken their matrimonial mate,
The youngsters keen
Search a' the dark decrees o' fate
At Hallowe'en.

A' things prepared in order due,
Gosh guide's! what fearfu' pranks ensue!
Some i' the kiln-pat thraw a clew,
At whilk, bedene,
Their sweethearts by the far end pu'
At Hallowe'en.

Ithers, wi' some uncanny gift,
In an auld barn a riddle lift,
Where, thrice pretending corn to sift,
Wi' charms between,
Their joe appears, as white as drift,
At Hallowe'en.

But 'twere a langsome tale to tell
The gates o' ilka charm and spell.
Ance, gaen to saw hempseed himsel,
Puir Jock Maclean,
Plump in a filthy peat-pot fell
At Hallowe'en.

[1] drenched.
[2] could hardly climb.
[3] yearn.
[4] magic spells.

Half filled wi' fear, and droukit[1] weel,
He frae the mire dught hardly speel[2];
But frae that time the silly chiel
Did never grien[3]
To cast his cantrips[4] wi' the Deil
At Hallowe'en.

O Scotland! famed for scenes like this,
That thy sons walk where wisdom is,
Till death in everlasting bliss
Shall steek[5] their e'en,
Will ever be the constant wish
of
Jockie Mein.

[5] close.

ROBERT BURNS.

1759-1796.

Of all the long growth of Scottish poetry there can be little doubt the work of Robert Burns was at last the flower. The heroic had found a voice in Barbour, Henry the Minstrel, and the Marquis of Montrose, pastoral delights in the verse of Henryson and Ramsay, allegory in Dunbar, and satire in Sir David Lyndsay and Sir Richard Maitland. Rustic jollity had been painted by James V., Francis Semple, and Robert Fergusson, and rural melancholy by Drummond of Hawthornden. The bitter-sweet pains of love had never wanted singers, including James I., Alexander Scot, and a host of nameless ballad-makers. And, almost in his own day, nature wild and free had found interpreters in Thomson and Fergusson and Bruce. But in the song of Burns all these passions and emotions, with a hundred others, were poured forth in a torrent which, for lyric vigour and variety, remains without a rival in the world.

The story of the life of Burns is well known by everyone, and may only be briefly summarized here. The cottage is still standing by the roadside, two miles southward out of Ayr, in which, on January 25, 1759, the poet was born. A story has recently gained some currency—it is given at length in the new *Evergreen* of Spring, 1895—that Burns was really a descendant of a wandering tribe of Highland bards of the name of Campbell; but the story has been sifted and entirely disproved by Mr. Wallace, the latest and one of the most painstaking editors of the poet's works. The grandfather of Burns was a farmer in Kincardineshire, and the poet's father, William Burness or Burnes, after working as a gardener in Edinburgh and on the estate of Doonside, near Ayr, had sought to add to his resources by taking a perpetual lease of seven acres of land, close by Alloway Kirk, on which with his own hands he set up the thatched clay "bigging" already referred to. To this dwelling in December, 1757, he brought home as his wife Agnes Brown, the daughter of a farmer in Kirkoswald, and the mother of the poet.

When Robert, who was the eldest of their family, was five years old, William Burnes leased the neighbouring farm, Mount

Oliphant, of some eighty-seven acres; and the proprietor, his former master, lent him a hundred pounds to stock it. From the burden of this undertaking, it may be said, William Burnes never recovered. On his landlord's death he fell into the hands of a factor who pressed him unmercifully, and for two years, till the end of the lease, the little household was driven to sore straits to tide over its difficulties. During that time, probably, the seeds were sown of the consumption which finally carried the good man off. When the poet was sixteen, his father took the larger farm of Lochlea, in Tarbolton parish, some ten miles further inland. But after four years residence here, he became involved in a lawsuit regarding the terms of his lease, which harassed him for three years. It was finally decided against him, and the decision meant ruin. The news of this was a final blow, and he was saved from the probable horrors of a gaol by the kindly hand of death.

Meanwhile, on the wheel of such stern circumstance, the poet's character had been taking shape. William Burnes, grave, irascible, and somewhat broken by ill-fortune, was of the intelligent type of the Scottish peasant, with his own sound thoughts on religion and his duties towards his family. The family catechism which he drew up, and the custom of friendly talk which he cultivated with his sons, show that he had ideas, and that he did his utmost to awaken and guide the intelligence of those in his charge. Of actual schooling Burns had the Scottish peasants' ordinary share. Grammar and writing he learned in the roadside schoolhouse, and arithmetic was taught him at home by his father. He lost none of his few opportunities, though these were bare enough, of bettering his knowledge; perfecting himself in French, after a fortnight's tuition; making a brave attempt at Latin; and even attending the parish school at Kirkoswald for a quarter to learn surveying. All the time he was greedily devouring every book he could lay his hands on. The boy who began at the age of nine by poring over "The Life of Hannibal" and the "History of Sir William Wallace," who struggled with ancient history as he found it in geographical grammars and Stackhouse's "History of the Bible," and who got his ideas of manners, criticism, and literature from works like Addison's "Spectator," Locke's "Understanding," and the poetry of Pope and Allan Ramsay, was by no means unprovided with the solid foundations of knowledge. It is true that from the age of thirteen a seemingly hard fate compelled him to moil like a galley-slave on his father's farm. That experience, however, was itself an education, and even when driven at his hardest he found time for books. There was a collection of songs which especially interested him. "I pored over them," he says, "driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse: carefully noting the true tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is." He wrote also

countless letters to friends, modelled on those in a stray volume of letters of wits of Queen Anne's time, which came by accident into his hands; conning and comparing them carefully, and keeping copies of the best. And before he was twenty-two we find him joining enthusiastically, with half a dozen companions, in the debates of a rural literary club. From these facts, and the list of the classic works of which he made himself the careful master, it will be seen that Burns was not at all the unlettered peasant he is sometimes supposed to have been.

Not less important was the development of the poet on the social side. While still a lad, he declares in his brief autobiography, he "was ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays between sermons, at funerals," &c., and soon became such an adept in Socinian argument as to excite an alarm of heresy among the more bigoted Calvinists of his neighbourhood. He was ambitious, also, after other social qualities. "In my seventeenth year," he says, "to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school"; and it was not long before he was perhaps the best and most enthusiastic dancer in the countryside. But his chief teacher of all was probably the influence of the gentler sex. To that influence he was extraordinarily amenable. So early as his fifteenth autumn "a bewitching creature" a year younger than himself, who was coupled with him in the labour of the harvestfield, took captive his susceptible heart; and he describes the furious ratan beat by his pulse as he "looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle stings." And his study of surveying at Kirkoswald was brought to a sudden stop by the appearance in a garden next door to the school of another charming specimen of the sex. As he declares himself, his heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other. While at Kirkoswald also, which lay near a smuggling coast, he had learned to mix in jovial company and enjoy a social glass. From that time onward the poet's life may be said to have been controlled by the three divinities—wine, woman, and song.

The declining health of William Burnes, and the difficulties gathering round the household at Lochlea, steadied the poet for a time. In his twenty-third year, with a view to improving his chances in life, Burns had joined a relative in the neighbouring town of Irvine, to learn the flax-dressing trade. But the undertaking proved unfortunate. Perhaps the poet, having joined the Free Masons in the town, did not give it much attention. Its end, at anyrate, was significant. In Burns's own words, "as we were giving a welcome carousal to the New Year, the shop took fire, and burnt to ashes; and I was left like a true poet—not worth a sixpence." When, however, his father's ruin seemed imminent, he and the other members of the family circle clubbed together, and, in order to provide a refuge in case of the worst, took the neighbouring farm of Mossgiel. Here each member of the

family was to receive ordinary wages for his work, and Burns's allowance was the sum of seven pounds per annum. Upon this farm the brothers Robert and Gilbert entered in November, 1783, and for three years struggled with a cold soil, a bleak situation, bad seed, and wet harvests. At the end of that time, notwithstanding the utmost diligence and economy, they found themselves compelled to give up their bargain, and the poet knew himself to be a penniless man. Meanwhile the pressure of another responsibility was growing upon him.

From the days of his first love-consciousness, when he picked the stings from the hand of his fair companion on the harvest-rig at Mount Oliphant, he had constantly been falling in love with one or other maiden of the countryside. So sincere was he, too, in each amour, while it lasted, that he seems generally to have met with a fair return. Once already, when at Irvine, he had been guilty of a wrong step, and had suffered for it the severe censure of the church. Again, he was taken captive by the beauty and the simple charm of Mary Campbell, that "Highland Mary" whom he has immortalised in more than one exquisite composition. She was only a servant lass in Coilsfield House, but she inspired the tenderest passion of the poet, and as he saw no possibility of making a home for himself in this country, he formed the plan of marrying her and emigrating to the West Indies. Burns himself gives a touching account of his final interview with her in a secluded spot on the banks of the Ayr, where the two spent a Sunday of May in taking farewell, before she should embark for her native Campbeltown to arrange matters among her friends for her marriage. On her return, a few months later, she was seized at Greenock with a malignant fever, which carried her off before her illness even was known to the poet. Then, in the town of Mauchline, which lay only a mile or so from Mossgiel, he became entangled with Jean Armour. The poor girl, who, there is every reason to believe, honestly loved him, was about to become a mother, and Burns, anxious to the utmost of his power to make amends to her, gave her a written acknowledgment of marriage—a deed perfectly legal and binding in Scotland to the present day. Her father, however, horrified at the match, induced her to destroy the writing; and the poet presently found himself pursued to find security for the support of the two children which had been born.

Flight to Jamaica was now his only hope, but he was without money to pay for his passage. As a resource in this extremity he bethought him of publishing a volume of his poetry. For some time he had been noted in the neighbourhood as a writer of rhymes. From the age of fifteen he had been in the habit of singing freely his loves and his hates. Many a damsel of the countryside, like "Nannie," "Montgomerie's Peggie," and the "Lass o' Ballochmyle," had found herself praised by the ploughman lad in verse that was not to be forgotten, while more than one divine and respectable humbug had been startled by the

exposure of his hypocrisies in pieces like the "Holy Fair," "The Twa Herds," and "Holy Willie's Prayer." These compositions were now gathered together, and published by subscription at Kilmarnock, putting the sum of twenty pounds into the poet's pocket. Thus provided, Burns was preparing to leave his native land for ever. He had been, he tells us, "for some days skulking from covert to covert under all the terrors of a gaol"—his chest was on the road to Greenock—when he was shown a letter from Dr. Blacklock which entirely changed his fate.

Fired by Blacklock's opinion that a second edition of the poems would find encouragement in Edinburgh, he set off at once for the capital. He was fortunate enough to have made the acquaintance, while still in Ayrshire, of Professor Stewart and the Earl of Glencairn, and through their interest, and an article on himself and his poetry by the "Man of Feeling," which just then appeared in the Edinburgh "Lounger," he found himself almost at once a lion of society. Throughout the ensuing winter he mingled freely with people of the highest distinction and rank, and as described by Sir Walter Scott and others who met him, his good sense, manners, and conversation proved in every way equal to the demands made upon them. Peers and professors were among his intimate friends; his evenings were spent in drawing-rooms such as those of the Duchess of Gordon and Lord Monboddo; and his nights were passed among the wits of the northern *noblesse de la robe* in the tavern revelry which was then fashionable. During all that time he was sharing the room and bed of a writer's clerk from Mauchline, in Baxter's Close, off the Lawnmarket.

In March, 1787, his second edition was published by Creech. For it the poet received one hundred pounds down, and the profits on the subscription sale of fifteen hundred copies. Another fifteen hundred were sold in the shops. The satire, humour, and pathos combined in an unheard-of way in his poetry, took the world by storm, and for a time he was the most talked-of personage in the kingdom.

Finding himself now in easy circumstances, he made several expeditions to the most famous parts of the country. After one tour through the Borders from Jedburgh to Berwick, and another by Stirling and Clackmannan to Dunfermline, he set off in August, in the company of the schoolmaster Nicol, on a Highland tour. In these journeys he saw many of the most interesting scenes in Scotland, met much company of all kinds, and was entertained at some of the highest houses in the land. Most of the following winter he spent in Edinburgh, but in February, 1788, he settled with Creech, his publisher, and, finding himself with five hundred pounds in pocket, he set off for home. Two hundred pounds he handed to his brother Gilbert to help in carrying on the farm and supporting his mother at Mossgiel. With the other three he himself took the farm of Ellisland on the Nith, six miles above Dumfries,

married Jean Armour, and carried her and the one remaining child of the four which had been born to them, to the new abode. At the same time, through the interest of Mr. Graham of Fintry, whom he had met at the Duke of Athole's, he received the appointment of exciseman of the district in which he lived.

At Ellisland, Burns kept two men and two maids, and was a good master to his servants; while his wife kept a spotless house, and provided a plentiful larder. As an exciseman, too, the poet was much liked. A story of him is told which illustrates his kindness of heart. A poor man at Duncow was rumoured to be in the habit of making a few pecks of malt in an old barn, and someone seeking favour informed Burns of the fact. But late on the night before a descent was made a card was pushed below the offender's door, stating that the exciseman would possibly visit the premises at a certain hour next day. His excise duties, however, and the inroads of visitors whom his poetic fame brought to Ellisland, to say nothing of the composition of many of his finest poems and songs, took up a great part of his time: and though he sometimes still held the plough, and sometimes sowed part of his oats, most of the farm work was perforce left to servants. Four years' experience satisfied him that the double occupation would not pay; and so, having received a better excise appointment in Dumfries, he threw up his lease, sold some of his effects, and removed into that town.

This final removal proved disastrous for Burns. In a town like Dumfries he was continually tempted to conviviality. His own house, either where he lived at first, in Friars Vennel (now Bank Street), or afterwards in the lane now known as Burns Street, was not suited for entertaining, and he was constantly invited, both by townsmen and by visitors, to spend an evening at the King's Arms Inn, or the Globe Tavern, or the Coach and Horses public house. There, hour after hour, his genius would enrapture the company and his humour keep the table in a roar, and the revelry would be prolonged far into the night. Such conviviality, constantly kept up, meant a drain upon his health which could not last. It is true that at Dumfries he still continued to write, and contributed the large number of sixty songs to Mr. Thomson's collection. On an excursion which he made with a friend through Galloway to visit the Earl of Selkirk at St. Mary's Isle, he composed, in the midst of a thunderstorm, the heroic Address of Bruce to his troops at Bannockburn—"Scots wha ha'e." He also took a careful interest in the education of his children. But his convivial habits made further and further inroads on his health and time, the company which he frequented was not always worthy of his genius, and some over free expressions on the subject of the French Revolution, then in progress, led the authorities to stop his promotion. Worst of all, one or two violations of the proprieties brought about his social ostracism. A story told by his biographer, Lockhart, of his last days is pathetic enough. It was the night of the

Assembly in Dumfries, and along one side of the street a throng of local fashion and beauty was making its way. On the other side of the street walked Burns, alone. Presently someone spoke to him and asked why he did not step over and speak to his friends. But the poet shook his head: "These fine folk," he said, "are my friends no longer." And then with a half smile he added the burden of the old song, "Werena my heart licht I wad dee."

Against the slights of former friends the spirit of Burns might still have borne up. In his secret heart he must have been conscious of something more than mere good intention. If, indeed, he had a passion for social enjoyment, he was but rarely known to indulge to excess. Whatever might be his occupation overnight, he never in any case neglected the duties of his post next day. And he appears, so far as domestic life was concerned, to have been an exemplary husband and father. But for all the two hundred and fifty songs, the cream of Scottish minstrelsy, which he contributed to Johnson's *Museum* and Thomson's *Collection*, he received in all only the sum of ten pounds; and on the breakdown of his health the Board of Excise seemed likely to reduce his salary of seventy pounds by half. His life all his days had been a hard one, and his constitution now gave way under the combined attacks of poverty, disease, and despair. A letter of the dying poet to George Thomson affords a glimpse of the tragic situation in the little household. After contributing without reward for years to the national collection of songs, and after refusing to write poetry to the *Chronicle* for a weekly payment, Burns must have been sorely pressed when he penned these lines: "After all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel —— of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into gaol. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a gaol have made me half distracted."

This was written on the 12th of July, 1796, from the little hamlet of Brow, on the Solway coast, whither Burns had gone in the hope that the sea-bathing might restore his health. Nine days later, on the 21st of the month, having returned without benefit to his own house in Dumfries, Scotland's great peasant poet breathed his last.

The ashes of Burns rest under a somewhat paltry monument in Dumfries kirkyard, but his works are his great memorial, and by them and the story of his life, with its hardships, its greatness, and its human frailties, he remains for ever the poet nearest to the hearts of the Scottish people.

It would be an impertinence to enter here upon any elaborate criticism of the writings of Burns. That has been done by Lockhart in his great life of the poet, and by the editors of many

excellent editions of Burns's works since. Of these editions Chambers's, now edited by Mr. William Wallace, may be regarded as the best. One thing only, perhaps, the present writer may be allowed to say. No poet, probably, excepting Shakespeare, ever owed more than Burns to the suggestions of predecessors in his art. Hardly, indeed, is there anything in his work, down even to details, for which the example is not to be found in the pages of some earlier Scottish poet—Dunbar, Lyndsay, Semple, Ramsay, Fergusson, and countless unnamed song and ballad writers. With the works of all these he was closely familiar. At the same time no poet, excepting Shakespeare, ever proved himself so capable of transmuting the rude ore of earlier suggestion into the fine gold of immortal song. It is difficult at the present day, when all its effects are a common possession, to appreciate the native strength and originality of Burns's work. This, however, may be ventured, that what the Revolution of that time did for France at a cost of untold horror and streams of blood, the poetry of Burns did for Scotland. Who will reckon the clearing of the air that has been made, the shams and affectations and cruel tyrannies that have been killed, and the courage and stamina which have been built into the nation's character by a single poem like "Scots wha ha'e" or "A man's a man for a' that"?

TAM O' SHANTER:

A TALE.*

Of Brownyis and of Bogilis full is this Buke.
—*Gawin Douglas.*

[1] lads.

WHEN chapman billies[1] leave the street,
And drouthy neibours, neibours meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
[2] road. And folk begin to tak' the gate[2];

* When Captain Grose was writing his work on Scottish antiquities, Burns pressed him to make mention of Alloway Kirk. This Grose agreed to do, provided Burns would furnish him with some story to be printed along with the engraving. The poem was the work of a single day. It was committed to writing on the top of a turf-dyke, and when it was finished Burns came into the house and read it aloud, in high triumph, by the fireside.

While we sit bousing at the nappy[1],
And gettin' fu' and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps[2], and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

[1] ale.

[2] gates.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter *
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice;
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum[3],
A blethering[4], blustering, drunken blellum[5];
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder[6], wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd[7] a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fu' on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.

[3] worthless fellow.

[4] nonsense-talking.

[5] idle talker.

[6] grain to be ground.

[7] driven.

* Shanter farm lies near Kirkoswald, some ten miles southward out of Ayr. The redoubtable Tam its owner, was of the actual name of Douglas Graham. The various localities mentioned in the poem are still pointed out on the old road between Ayr and Kirkoswald.

She prophesied, that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drowned in Doon;
Or catched wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthened sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night
Tam had got planted, unco right[1],
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats[2], that drank divinely,
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony.
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fu' for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious;
The souter[3] tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus;
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himsel' amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' loads o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure.
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

[1] uncommonly right (unco, *lit.* unknown; *ergo*, to unknown extent).
[2] frothing ale.
[3] shoemaker.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed!
Or like the snow-fall in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide:
The hour approaches, Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he tak's the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattlin' showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed;
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit[1] on through dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets[2] nightly cry.

[1] scudded.

[2] owls.

By this time he was 'cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoored[1];
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drucken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel'.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars through the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering through the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
Through ilka bore[2] the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

[1] smothered.

[2] hole in the wall.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny[3], we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae we'll face the devil!
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle[4].
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!—
Warlocks and witches in a dance.
Nae cotillon brent[5] new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.

[3] twopenny ale.

[4] a small copper coin.

[5] quite, *lit.* smooth, bright.

A winnock-bunker[1] in the east,
There sat auld Nick in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke[2], black, grim, and large,
To gi'e them music was his charge.
He screwed his pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl[3].
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip[4] sleight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns:
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns:
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape:
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter which a babe had strangled:
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu'
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

[1] window-seat.
[2] shaggy dog.
[3] tremble.
[4] incantation.

As Tammie glow'red, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit[5],
Till ilka carline swat and reekit[6],

[5] hooked on.
[6] each old woman sweated and smoked.

And coost her duddies[1] to the wark,
And linkit[2] at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queans,
A' plump and strapping, in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen[3],
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linnen;
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad ha'e gi'en them aff my hurdies[4]:
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies[5]!
But withered beldams auld and droll,
Rigwoodie[6] hags wad spean[7] a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock[8]
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenn'd what was what fu' brawly;
There was ae winsome wench and walie[9],
That night enlisted in the corps,
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perished mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the countryside in fear).
Her cutty sark[10], o' Paisley harn[11],
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie[12].
Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft[13] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots (twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

[1] clothes.
[2] sped.
[3] greasy flannel.
[4] loins.
[5] fair ones.
[6] straddling.
[7] wean.
[8] cow with crooked horns.
[9] choice, jolly.
[10] short shirt.
[11] coarse linen.
[12] inclined to flaunt.
[13] bought.

But here my muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was and strang);
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched.
Even Satan glow'red and fidged[1] fu' fain,
And hotched[2] and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

[1] stared and fidgeted.
[2] hitched in his seat.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke[3],
When plundering herds assail their byke[4];
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch screech and hollow.

[3] fuss.
[4] hive.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'lt get thy fairin'!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;*

* It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream.—*Burns.*

There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail[1] she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle.[2]
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought aff her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carline claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

[1] devil a tail.

[2] intent.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son tak' heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think ye may buy the joys ower dear—
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor."—*Gray.*

My loved, my honoured, much respected friend,
No mercenary bard his homage pays:
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise.
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there,
I wean.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough;
The short'ning winter day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh,
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose.
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes;

This night his weekly moil is at an end;
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree!
Th' expectant wee things, toddlin', stacher[1] through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin'[2] noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

Belyve[3] the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out amang the farmers roun',
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tenty rin[4]
A canny errand to a neibour town;
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparklin' in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny fee[5].
To help her parents dear, if they in hardships be.

Wi' joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's welfare kindly speers:
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncos[6] that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;

1 totter.
2 fluttering.
3 Presently.
4 heedful run.
5 money wage.
6 strange things.

Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eident[1] hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk[2] or play;
"And oh! be sure to fear the LORD alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might;
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

[1] diligent.
[2] trifle.

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door.
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tell how a neibour lad cam' o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek:
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny halflins[3] is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

[3] partly.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben—
A strappin' youth; he tak's the mother's e'e;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,

But blate[1] and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother wi' a woman's wiles can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave[2].

[1] bashful.

[2] rest.

Oh happy love! where love like this is found!
Oh heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
If Heav'n a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child,
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;
The soupe their only hawkie[3] does afford,
That 'yont the hallan[4] snugly chows her cood:

[3] cow.

[4] division wall.

The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck fell[1],
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond[2] auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

[1] well-preserved doughty cheese.

[2] twelvemonth.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[3] wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales[4] a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship GOD!" he says with solemn air.

[3] grizzled side-locks.

[4] chooses.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name,
Or noble "Elgin" beets[5] the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise:
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

[5] adds fuel to.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;

Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
  Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or, Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
  Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme.—
  How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
  Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped;
  The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
  Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by
    Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,
  The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
  That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
  No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
  In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
  In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
  Devotion's every grace, except the heart!

The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleased, the language of the soul,
And in his Book of Life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of GOD!"
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind.
What is a lordling's pomp?—a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!

And oh! may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide,
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part—
The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward —
Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.*

Oh Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou has left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light
To a' this place.

* "Holy Willie's Prayer" was written to support Gavin Hamilton in his quarrel with the session of "Daddy Auld's" Kirk in Mauchline. When the case was carried before the synod, the plea of the session was dismissed as spiteful and malicious. Holy Willie, one William Fisher, was a leading member of the session, as notorious for his inquisitiveness in examination of feminine transgressors as he was for sanctimonious profession. He was suspected of making free with the poor's money, did not hesitate to "get fu'" when someone else was paying for the liquor, and in the end, one night, when returning home after partaking freely, he fell into a ditch, and was found dead.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation,
I wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Through Adam's cause?

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might ha'e plunged me into hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Where damned devils roar and yell,
Chained to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample:
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord! thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there, and dancin' here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.

But yet O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fashed[1] wi' fleshy lust,
And sometimes too, wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled in sin.

[1] troubled.

O Lord! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
Oh! may't ne'er be a livin' plague,
To my dishonour,
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her

Besides, I farther maun avow,
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times, I trow;
But Lord! that Friday I was fu'
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er ha'e steer'd her.

Maybe thou lets this fleshy thorn,
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy han' maun e'en be borne
Until thou lift it.

Lord! bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race:
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
And public shame!

Lord! mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

And when we chastened him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore[1],
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

[1] riot.

Lord! hear my earnest cry and prayer,
Against the presbyt'ry of Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak' it bare
Upo' their heads,
Lord! weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord my God! that glib-tongued Aiken,
My very heart and saul are quakin',
To think how we stood groanin', shakin',
And swat wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hingin' lip gaed snakin',
And hid his head.

Lord! in the day of vengeance try him,
Lord! visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their prayer;
But for thy people's sake, destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord! remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excelled by nane;
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen! Amen!

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

HERE Holy Willie's sair-worn clay
Tak's up its last abode;
His soul has ta'en some other way,
I fear the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the grun',
Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,
Till ance ye've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye ha'e nane:
Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, sir, deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof[1] like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

[1] person.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1787.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle[1]!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle[2]!

[1] battling hurry.

[2] plough-stick.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion,
Which mak's thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
And fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve.
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave[3]
'S a sma' request,
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave[4],
And never miss't!

[3] An occasional ear of corn in a pair of stooks (*i.e.* in 24 sheaves).

[4] rest.

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly[1] wa's the win's are strewin'!
And naething, now, to big[2] a new ane,
O' foggage green!
And bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell[3] and keen!

[1] frail.
[2] build.
[3] biting.

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin' fast,
And cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter passed
Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole[4] the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch[5] cauld!

[4] endure.
[5] hoar-frost.

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice and men,
Gang aft a-gley[6],
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promised joy.

[6] askew.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee;
But Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear;
And forward, though I canna see,
I guess and fear.

HALLOWE'EN.

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."
—*Goldsmith.*

UPON that night, when fairies light,
On Cassilis Downans dance,*
Or owre the leas in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colzean the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams!
There, up the cove, to stray and rove
Among the rocks and streams,
To sport that night.

Amang the bonnie winding banks
Where Doon rins, wimplin', clear,
Where BRUCE ance ruled the martial ranks,
And shook his Carrick spear,†

* Certain little romantic, rocky green hills in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.—*Burns.*

† By right of his mother Bruce was Earl of Carrick.

Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, and pu' their stocks,
And haud their Hallowe'en,
Fu' blithe that night.

The lasses feat, and cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blithe, fu' sweetly kythe[1]
Hearts leal, and warm, and kind:
The lads sae trig[2], wi' wooer-babs[3],
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, and some wi' gabs[4],
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whyles fast that night.

[1] make known.

[2] spruce.
[3] garters knotted with double loops.
[4] talkative powers.

Then first and foremost through the kail
Their stocks maun a' be sought ance.
They steek their een, and graip, and wale[5],
For meikle anes and straught anes.
Poor hav'rel[6] Will fell aff the drift,
And wandered through the bow-kail[7],
And pu't, for want o' better shift,
A runt[8] was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

[5] close eyes and grope and choose.
[6] half-witted.
[7] cabbage.
[8] cabbage stalk.

Then, straught or crooked, yird[9] or nane,
They roar and cry a' throu'ther[10];
The vera wee things, todlin', rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;

[9] earth.
[10] pell-mell.

And gif the custock's[1] sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs[2] they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' canny care, they place them
To lie that night.*

[1] kail-stock heart.
[2] knives.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
To pu' their stalks o' corn;†
But Rab slips out, and jinks about,
Behind the meikle thorn;
He grippit Nelly hard and fast;
Loud skirled a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle[3] maist was lost,
When kittlin' in the fause-house[4]
Wi' him that night.

[3] top-seed (*i.e.* maiden snood).
[4] tickling in the hollow inside of a stack.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordet nits
Are round and round divided,
And mony lads' and lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie[5], side by side,
And burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

[5] familiar.

* As the stocks are straight or crooked, with earth on the root or not, the future spouse will be erect or bent, moneyed or penniless. The taste of the pith corresponds to the temper of the lover, and the stocks having been placed above the door, the christian names of chance comers are the names of the respective future husbands or wives.

† Three straws are pulled. If the third lacks the top grain, the puller will not be maiden at her marriage.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e[1];
  Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, and this is me,
  She says in to hersel':
He bleezed owre her, and she owre him,
  As they wad never mair part;
Till, fuff! he started up the lum,
  And Jean had e'en a sair heart
    To see't that night.

[1] careful eye.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
  Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie[2];
And Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt[3],
  To be compared to Willie:
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
  And her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swoor by jing,
  'Twas just the way he wanted
    To be that night.

[2] demure Mary.

[3] pet.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
  She pits hersel' an Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
  Till white in ase they're sobbin';
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
  She whispered Rob to look for't:
Rob, stowlins, prie'd[4] her bonnie mou'
  Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
    Unseen that night.

[4] by stealth tasted.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin'[1] at their cracks[2],
And slips out by hersel':
She through the yard the nearest tak's,
And to the kiln she goes then,
And darklins graipit for the bauks,
And in the blue clue throws then,
Right fear't that night.*

[1] conversing.
[2] talk.

And aye she win't[3], and aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin'[4]:
Till something held within the pat,
Gude Lord! but she was quakin'!
But whether 'twas the deil himsel',
Or whether it was a bauk-en'[5]!
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na' wait on talkin'
To spier that night.

[3] winded.
[4] idling.
[5] end of a rafter.

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
I'll eat the apple at the glass,†
I gat frae uncle Johnnie;"

* The enquirer of the Fates throws a clue of blue yarn into the kiln-pot, and proceeds to wind it from the other end. Towards the last something will hold it, the enquirer will ask "Wha hauds?" and the reply will be the name of the future husband.

† Eat an apple by candlelight before a looking-glass and the face of your "fate" will be seen in the mirror looking over your shoulder.

She fuff't[1] her pipe wi' sic a lunt[2],
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
She notic't na, an aizle[3] brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out through that night.

[1] puffed.
[2] smoke.
[3] hot cinder.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's[4] face!
How daur ye try sic sportin',
As seek the foul Thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune?
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye ha'e to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
And lived and died deleeret[5]
On sic a night.

[4] scudding reprobate.
[5] delirious.

"Ae hairst[6] afore the Sherra-muir,
I mind 't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey[7] then, I'm sure
I was na past fifteen:
The simmer had been cauld and wat,
And stuff was unco green:
And aye a rantin' kirn[8] we gat,
And just on Hallowe'en
It fell that night.

[6] harvest.
[7] half-grown girl.
[8] churning in which the butter does not gather rightly.

"Our stibble-rig[9] was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That lived in Achmacalla:

[9] leading reaper.

He gat hemp-seed, I mind it weel,
And he made unco light o't;
But mony a day was by himsel',
He was sae sairly frightened
That vera night."

Than up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
And he swore by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense!
The auld guid-man raught down the pock[1],
And out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bade him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
And try't that night.

He marches through amang the stacks,
Though he was something sturtin'[2],
The grape he for a harrow tak's,
And haurls at his curpin[3]:
And ev'ry now and then he says,
"Hemp-seed, I saw thee,
And her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, and draw thee,
As fast this night."*

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Although his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd[4] and eerie;

[1] reached down the bag.

[2] frightened.

[3] drags at his crupper (*i.e.* trails it behind him).

[4] scared.

* On carrying through this formula look over the left shoulder, and the form of the prospective partner will be seen in the act of pulling hemp.

Till presently he hears a squeak,
And then a grane and gruntle;
He by his shouther ga'e a keek[1],
And tumbled wi' a wintle[2]
Out-owre that night.

[1] peep.
[2] stagger.

He roared a horrid murder shout,
In dreadfu' desperation;
And young and auld cam' rinnin' out,
To hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin'[3] Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie[4] Merran Humphie,
Till stop! she trotted through them a';
And wha was it but Grumphie[5]
Asteer that night!

[3] halting.
[4] crook-backed.
[5] the sow.

Meg fain wad to the barn ha'e gane,
To win three wechts[6] o' naething;*
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in.
She gi'es the herd a pickle nits,
And twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

[6] winnow three measures.

She turns the key wi' canny thraw,
And owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gi'es a ca',
Syne bauldly in she enters.

* At the third winnowing the apparition of one's husband to be passes through the barn.

A ratton[1] rattled up the wa',
And she cried "Lord preserve her!"
And ran through midden-hole and a',
And prayed wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

[1] rat.

They hoy't[2] out Will, wi' sair advice:
They hecht[3] him some fine braw ane:
It chanced the stack he faddom'd thrice[4],
Was timmer-propt for thrawin'[5],
He taks a swirlie[6] auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome carline;
And loot a winze[7], and drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam' haurlin'[8]
Aff's nieves[9] that night.*

[2] urged.
[3] promised.
[4] measured round thrice.
[5] twisting.
[6] knotted.
[7] oath.
[8] in large shreds came drawing.
[9] fists.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlin'[10];
But Och! that night, amang the shaws[11],
She got a fearfu' settlin'!
She through the whins, and by the cairn,
And owre the hills gaed scrievin'[12],
Whare three lairds' lands met at a burn,
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night. †

[10] kitten.
[11] wildwood.
[12] gliding swiftly.

* The last fathom of the last time you catch in your arms the figure of your future yoke-fellow.

† The left shirt sleeve, thus dipped, is hung before a fire, and the enquirer goes to bed and lies watching. Close upon midnight the desired apparition will be seen in the act of turning it.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As through the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
Whyles in a wiel[1] it dimpl't:
Whyles glittered to the nightly rays
Wi' bickering dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit[2] underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

[1] small whirlpool.

[2] appeared and disappeared by turns.

Amang the brackens, on the brae,
Between her and the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey[3],
Gat up and gae a croon.
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool[4];
Near lav'rock height she jumpit,
But missed a fit, and in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

[3] unhoused year-old cow.

[4] outer shell.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies[5] three are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed;*
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's year did desire,
Because he gat the toom[6] dish thrice,
He heaved them on the fire,
In wrath that night.

[5] small wooden dishes with handles.

[6] empty.

* The enquirer is blindfolded, the dishes changed, and according as he happens with his left hand on that full of clean water, or dirty water, or none, will he marry a maid, a widow, or no one at all.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
I wat they didna weary;
And unco tales, and funnie jokes,
Their sports were cheap and cheery;
Till buttered sow'ns[1], wi' fragrant lunt[2],
Set a' their gabs a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt[3],
They parted aff careerin'
Fu' blithe that night.

[1] meal-flour porridge.
[2] steam.
[3] strong liquor.

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,*

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

April 1st, 1785.

WHILE briers and woodbines budding green,
And paitricks scraichin'[1] loud at e'en,
And morning pussie whiddin'[2] seen,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

[1] partridges screeching.
[2] scudding.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin'[3]
To ca' the crack[4] and weave our stockin';
And there was meikle fun and jokin',
Ye need na' doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

[3] social gathering, *lit.* distaff-spinning.
[4] drive the talk.

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirled[5] the heart-strings through the breast,
A' to the life.

[5] thrilled.

* See Vol. I., p. 207.

I've scarce heard aught describe sae weel
What generous manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

[1] restlessly eager.
[2] enquired.

It pat me fidgin'-fain[1] to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier't[2],
Then a' that ken't him, round declared
He had ingine,
That nane excelled it, few cam' near't,
It was sae fine.

[3] sober.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
And either douce[3] or merry tale,
Or rhymes and sangs he'd made himsel',
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

[4] harness.
[5] pedlar-pony's.

Then up I gat, and swoor an aith,
Though I should pawn my pleugh and graith[4],
Or die a cadger pownie's[5] death,
At some dyke-back,
A pint and gill I'd gi'e them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first and foremost, I should tell,
A'maist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle[1] fell;
Though rude and rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sel',
Does weel eneugh.

[1] doggrel.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like, by chance,
And ha'e to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You, wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak' a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs[2] your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools[3],
Or knappin' hammers[4].

[2] serves.

[3] shovels.

[4] stone-breaking hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes[1]
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks[2], and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
And syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

[1] awkward duffers.

[2] year-old bullocks.

Gi'e me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire:
Then though I drudge through dub and mire
At pleugh or cart,
My muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

Oh for a spunk[3] o' Allan's glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear[4] enough for me!
If I could get it.

[3] spark.

[4] learning.

Now, Sir, if ye ha'e friends enow—
Though real friends, I believe, are few;
Yet, if your catalogue be fu'
I'se no insist;
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel';
As ill I like my faults to tell:
But friends, and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me[1], [1] praise.
Though I maun own, as mony still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgi'e me!
For mony a plack[2] they wheedle frae me, [2] small copper coin, ⅓d. sterling.
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gi'e me
They weel can spare.

But, Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gi'e ae night's discharge to care,
If we foregather,
And ha'e a swap[3] o' rhymin' ware [3] exchange.
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
And kirsen him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we'll sit down and tak' our whitter[4], [4] hearty draught.
To cheer our heart;
And faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa', ye selfish warldly race,
Wha think that havins[1], sense, and grace,
Ev'n love and friendship should give place
To catch-the-plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

[1] manners.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose heart the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle:
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing or whistle
Your friend and servant.

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON.

Flow gently, sweet Afton! among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton! disturb not her dream.*

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton! thy neighbouring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow!
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

* The subject of this exquisite song was Mrs. Stewart of Afton and Stair, who had been attracted to make the acquaintance of the poet through seeing some of his letters and poems in the hands of her children's nurse, Peggy Orr. Needless to say, the song affords only a very imaginary view of the relations between the lady and the poet.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton! among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton! disturb not her dream.

WILLIE BREWED A PECK O MAUT.

O Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam' to pree[1];
Three blither hearts, that lee-lang[2] night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.*

[1] taste.
[2] live-long.

We are na fu', we're no that fu',
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys.
Three merry boys I trow are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!
We are na fu', &c.

* The meeting celebrated in this composition, which Lockhart considered "the best of all Burns's bacchanalian pieces," took place at the farm of Laggan, near Moffat, in Dumfriesshire. William Nicol, the Edinburgh schoolmaster, had bought the farm, and Burns and Allan Masterton went up from Dalswinton to visit him. Day dawned, says tradition, ere the guests rose to go. "We had such a joyous meeting," says Burns, "that Masterton and I agreed, each in his own way, to celebrate the business. The air is Masterton's, the song is mine."

It is the moon—I ken her horn—
That's blinkin' in the lift[1] sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wile us hame,
But by my troth she'll wait a wee!
We are na fu', &c.

[1] shining in the heaven.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
A cuckold coward loon is he!
Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!
We are na fu', &c.

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield[1] should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

[1] shelter.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown,
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.*

* Addressed to Mrs. Riddel of Woodlee Park, who, in spite of an after quarrel, and some indiscretion on the part of Burns, remained the last friend of the poet.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

THOU lingering star, with lessening ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love!
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace—
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening green!
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured scene;

The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
  The birds sang love on every spray—
Till soon, too soon, the glowing west
  Proclaimed the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
  And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression stronger makes,
  As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary! dear departed shade!
  Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
  Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?*

* Composed at Ellisland in September, 1789, on the anniversary of the day on which Burns heard of the death of his early love, Mary Campbell.

TAM GLEN.

My heart is a-breaking, dear tittie[1],
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinkin', wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith I might mak' a fen[2]:
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I maunna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie the laird o' Drummeller,
"Gude day to you, brute," he comes ben:
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie[3] does constantly deave[4] me,
And bids me beware o' young men:
They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gi'e me gude hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordained I maun tak' him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

[1] sister.

[2] successful battle.

[3] mother.
[4] deafen.

Yestreen at the valentines dealing,
My heart to my mou' gi'ed a sten[1];
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written—Tam Glen!

[1] rear, leap.

The last Hallowe'en I was waukin'[2]
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam' up the house stalkin',
And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

[2] watching.

Come counsel, dear tittie! don't tarry;
I'll gi'e you my bonnie black hen
Gin ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

OF A' THE AIRTS.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
Though wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
Baith day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.*

* This beautiful love-song was written while Burns was superintending the building of Ellisland, travelling only sometimes to Ayrshire to see his newly-married Jean Armour. Two further stanzas were added by John Hamilton the music-seller (q.v.), and another two by William Reid, of the firm of Brash & Reid, booksellers, Glasgow.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS
TO HIS ARMY AT BANNOCKBURN.

Scots, wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled;
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!*

* Burns, at Thomson's suggestion, wrote a second, weakened version of "Scots wha ha'e" to suit the exigencies of an air.

WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU.

O WHISTLE, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad;
Though faither and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent[1], when ye come to court me,
And come na unless the back yett[2] be a-jee;
Syne up the back stile, and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin' to me—
And come as ye were na comin' to me.

[1] attend.
[2] gate.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as though ye cared na a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me—
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.

Aye vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whiles ye may lightly[3] my beauty a wee;
But court na anither, though jokin' ye be,
For fear that she wile your fancy frae me—
For fear that she wile your fancy frae me.*

[3] make light of.

* Burns perfected this song from a briefer sketch which he had contributed to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum.*

NANNIE.

Behind yon hill, where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors and mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has closed,
And I'll awa' to Nannie, O!

The westlin' wind blaws loud and shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid and out I'll steal,
And owre the hills to Nannie, O!

My Nannie's charming, sweet, and young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O;
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O!

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
She's spotless as she's bonnie, O;
The opening gowan, wet wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O!

A country lad is my degree,
And few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be?—
I'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee[1],
And I maun guide it canny, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a' my Nannie, O!

[1] money wage.

Our auld gudeman delights to view
His sheep and kye thrive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blithe that hauds his pleugh,
And has nae care but Nannie, O!

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll take what Heaven will send me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, and love my Nannie, O!*

* "Nannie," one of Burns's early songs, was written in honour of Agnes Fleming, a servant at Calcothill, near Lochlea.

MARY MORISON.

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor!
How blithely wad I bide the stoure[1],
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

[1] endure the storm.

Yestreen when, to the trembling string,
The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
Though this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed and said, amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly dee?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gi'e,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.*

* The grave of Mary Morison is to be seen in Mauchline kirkyard.

FOR A' THAT, AND A' THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty,
  That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
  Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
  The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin grey[1], and a' that;
Gi'e fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A man's a man for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show, and a' that,
The honest man, though e'er sae poor;
  Is king o' men for a' that!

[1] coarse woollen cloth.

You see yon birkie[2], ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, and stares, and a' that,
Though hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a coof[3] for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
  His riband, star, and a' that;
The man of independent mind,
  He looks and laughs at a' that.

[2] forward fellow.

[3] ninny.

A prince can mak' a belted knight,
A marquis, duke and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith, he maunna fa'[1] that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that!

[1] must not allot that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree[2], and a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Its comin' yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

[2] bear off the palm.

MY NANNIE'S AWA'.

Now in her green mantle blithe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless—my Nannie's awa'!

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nannie's awa'!

Thou lav'rock that springs frae the dews o' the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis, that hails the nightfa',
Give over for pity—my Nannie's awa'!

Come autumn, sae pensive, in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay;
The dark, dreary winter, and wind-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie's awa'!

AULD LANG SYNE.

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa ha'e run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa ha'e paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine:
But seas between us braid ha'e roared,
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty frien',
And gi'e's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak' a right gude willie-waught[1],
For auld lang syne.

[1] choice draught.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

* An early poem with this title and sentiment by Francis Semple of Beltrees was printed before 1700, and a second part by the same poet appeared in Watson's Collection, 1706, while still another song with the title was given in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*. Of the song now sung, and here given, Burns disavowed the authorship, saying he had taken it down from an old man's singing. There is reason to believe, however, that it was, in part at least, his own. The second and third stanzas, at anyrate, would appear to be by Burns.

THE BANKS O' DOON.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons through the flowering thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return.

Oft ha'e I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
But my fause lover stole my rose,
And ah! he left the thorn wi' me.*

* According to Allan Cunningham the heroine of this song was Miss Kennedy, daughter of Kennedy of Dalgarnock. Her lover was M'Douall of Logan, and, being deserted by him, on the birth of her child she died of a broken heart.

MY AIN KIND DEARIE, O!

When o'er the hill the eastern star,
Tells bughtin'-time[1] is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrowed field
Return sae dowf[2] and weary, O,
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig[3],
My ain kind dearie, O!

[1] folding-time.

[2] pithless.

[3] grass-ridge.

In mirkest glen, at midnight hour,
I'd rove and ne'er be eerie, O!
If through that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie, O!
Although the night were ne'er sae wild,
And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
I'd meet the on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gi'e me the hour o' gloamin' grey,
It mak's my heart sae cheery, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!*

* The third stanza was added to this song by Burns at the suggestion of Thomson, for whose collection the song was written.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER.

Last May a braw wooer cam' doun the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men—
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me, believe me;
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me!

He spak' o' the darts in my bonnie black e'en,
And vowed for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked, for Jean:
The Lord forgi'e me for lying, for lying;
The Lord forgi'e me for lying!

[1] farm.

A weel-stocked mailen[1], himsel' for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or cared,
But thought I might ha'e waur offers, waur offers;
But thought I might ha'e waur offers.

But what wad ye think?—in a fortnight or less,
The deil tak' his taste to gae near her!

[2] long lane.

He up the lang loan[2] to my black cousin Bess
Guess ye how, the jaud! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jaud! I could bear her.

But a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste[1] o' Dalgarnock, [1] cattle fair.
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there!
I glow'red[2] as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock; [2] stared.
I glow'red as I'd seen a warlock.

But ower my left shoulder I ga'e him a blink,
Lest neibours might say I was saucy;
My wooer he capered as he'd been in drink,
And vowed I was his dear lassie, dear lassie;
And vowed I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin, fu' couthy[3] and sweet, [3] kind.
Gin she had recovered her hearin',
And how my auld shoon[4] suited her shauchled[5] feet, [4] *i.e.* old lover. [5] out of shape.
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin', a swearin'!
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin'!

He begged, for Guidsake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I would kill him wi' sorrow:
So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow;
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

AE FOND KISS.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas! for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her, was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure?
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas! for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.*

* This song is said to have been inspired by Clarinda. Scott declared the second stanza to contain the essence of a thousand love-tales.

THE AUTHOR OF "THE HAR'ST RIG."

Fl. 1786.

Almost nothing is known of the writer of what remains the best poetic picture of a Lothian harvest-field, with its characteristic humours and circumstance, in the end of the eighteenth century. The poem bears to have been "written in Autumn, 1786, by a farmer in the vicinity of Edinburgh." In its first edition, in 1794, it was printed along with a similar piece of rural description, "The Farmer's Ha'," which, according to the preface, was written by an Aberdeen student, and first published about the year 1774. The author, it is expressly stated, had no connexion with the publication. "The Farmer's Ha'" would appear to have afforded William Beattie the suggestion for his "Winter's Night." From allusions in "The Har'st Rig" to "The Farmer's Ha'," and from the obvious leanings of the author to the Highland character, it seems just possible that the Aberdeen student and the Lothian farmer were the same person.

Several editions of "The Har'st Rig" have been printed, and it was freely quoted as an authority on the Scots vernacular by Jamieson in his Dictionary.

THE HAR'ST RIG.

[The first part of the poem describes the approach of harvest, the unwillingness of servants and cottars to attack the heavy work, and the engagement of bands of reapers from Edinburgh and the Highlands. The farmer arranges his workers on the field, directing them to cut low and clean, and the work begins. Gleaners encroach and begin to steal from the stooks, till driven at last from the field. The breakfast bivouac is described, then the gossip of the reapers as they renew their work. A scolding match ensues between two Edinburgh wives, then a struggle for superiority in speed of reaping, till the farmer, discovering some careless and hasty cutting, brings the men back to sober work.]

But raking[1] clouds now gather fast,
And a' the lift[2] does soon o'er-cast:
Some ane now cries, "We'll ha'e a blast,
The skies do lower;"
Anither says, "It winna last—
A flying shower."

[1] roving.
[2] heaven.

Mair scouthry-like[3] it still does look,
At length comes on a mochy rook[4]:
The Embrugh wives rin to a stook;
It were nae fau't;
But Highlanders ne'er mind a douk[5],
"For they're na saut."

[3] like a flying shower.
[4] misty wrack.
[5] drenching.

Say they, "What needs we be afraid?
For 'tis a blout will soon be laid,
And we may hap[1] us in our plaid
Till it blaws o'er.
'Tis pity for to break our bread
For a sma' shower!"

[1] fold.

But now it rains sae very fast,
They're a' obliged to rin at last:
Their claes on hastily they cast,
And aff they scour;
For now it turns an eident[2] blast,
An even-down pour.

[2] becomes a persevering.

The cottars a' rin to their hames;
For them there needs to mak' nae maens.
The Embrugh tribe scarce crawl their lanes,
Sae sair they're droukit[3]:
For wet's their claes, and cauld's their banes,
They're sadly doukit.

[3] drenched.

Quo' they, "We're murdered clean aff hand,"
As in the kitchen now they stand,
"For sic a blast we never fand;
And O!" quo' they,
"We're sadly skaithed and sair we're wranged,
This rainy day!"

They sair bemean some paitlich-gown[1]—
Some yellow-dippit[2] stained wi' brown—
Which they brought, claithlike, frae the town;
But now, a seat
By th' ingle-side, they clank them down,
For they're ne'er blate[3].

[1] a kind of neckerchief.
[2] tippet?
[3] bashful.

And now it is na very lang
Till a' the "Trout-shows[4]," in a bang,
Do come, and to the barn they thrang,
For that's their hame:
Into the ha' they never gang,
For they think shame.

[4] Gaelic for "Come here!"

But straught into the barn they hie,
And hang their claes to dreep and dry,
Syne sit them down a sang to try,
To pass the time:
Up springs the pipes, and a' do vie
Wi' them to chime.

Now dances Neil wi' little Nell,
And comely Kate wi' "her nainsel';"
But Donald Dhu bears off the bell
Wi' Flora Fair:
In sprightly dancing they excel
Beyond compare.

Thus do they pass the time away,
Even every night or rainy day.
Cold shivering blasts do not dismay
The Celtic race:
Their native vigour they display
In every place.

But now, whileas the shower does last,
'Tis na thought proper they should fast,
The scogie[1] lass does rin wi' haste,
And bring the kail,
On which they dine, and mak' repast,
Or baps[2] and ale.

[1] scullion.

[2] thick cakes of bread.

Nae sooner is the dinner o'er,
Than Highland Malcolm gangs to glower,
And see the weather, gin the shower
Be blawn awa'.
Sae soon's the sky looks nae mair sour
He tells them a'.

They ask now gin the master please
To let them gang and shear the pease;
For they are laith to lose their fees
By broken days.
They're glad when he permission gi'es
To gae their ways.

But sair it grieves the Embrugh breed
That they maun troop wi' siccan[1] speed.
They cry wi' haste, "What is the need
To shear ava'?
It will be soon enough indeed
This hour or twa!"

[1] suchlike.

The Highlanders ne'er mind their din,
But fast afield awa' do rin,
And there they straughtway do begin
To work their wa's.
The townsfolk draigle far ahin',
By anes and twas.

At length they are a' gotten out,
And syne they work anither bout;
But as they ettle for to lout[2]
The pease to shear,
The wives fill weel their laps, nae doubt,
Ye needna speer.

[2] make to stoop.

Frae this it isna very lang
Till they do lilt some canty sang,
Sic as *Pease Strae*, or *Jenny dang*[3]
The weaver, braw,
The tailor through the bed did gang
Thimble and a'.

[3] overcame.

The Embrugh lass fu' loud does cry
Gin ony will *Broom Besoms*[1] buy?
The *Grey Breeks* next, and then she'll try
The Sodger Laddie.
'Tis her delight. Then, *O! to lie*
In Highland plaidie.

[1] gorse brooms.

The Highland lasses raise the song
In music wild and sweet and strong:
All join in chorus, as along
The subject strays;
The hills and dales resounding long
The cheerful lays.

At length the sun does wear down low,
Which a' the field fu' weel does know.
The Embrugh wives cry "Let us go,
And quit our wark!
'Tis after six, and mirk does grow;
'Twill soon be dark."

To this the master gi'es nae heed,
But redds[2] them "mind their wark" indeed.
Quo' they, "Wha, deil, can shear wi' speed
That hasna light?
Come, light the candles! for there's need
O' them this night."

[2] counsels.

But yet, for a' their clamour, still
They are kept sair against their will.
They ever and anon stand still,
And yamour sair[1]:
"We're sure we do our day fulfil,
And meikle mair!

"To keep's sae late is a great wrang,
When now the day's sae very lang!"
But they might as weel sing a sang
Wi' a' their sikes[2];
The master lets his shearers gang
Just when he likes.

But glad are they when he does say,
"Now fill your raips[3] and get away!
This shall be held nae broken day,"
"*Tchoukin, tchoukin*[4]*!*
Gaghé, Gaghé[5]*!*" the clans now cry;
"*O tchoukin brochin*[6]*!*"

The bedding time does now begin,
Whan ilka ane does wale[7] their kin,
And for their bed awa' do rin
To get some strae.
And here there is nae little din
Till it they ha'e.

[1] murmur sore.
[2] sighs.
[3] ropes.
[4] Come away!!
[5] Home, home.
[6] Come away to supper.
[7] choose.

This being had, the blankets next
They seek wi' haste, and share betwixt
Themsel's in manner as is fixed
By usage lang.
Now, though they're a' together mixed,
There's naething wrang.

But still the dorty[1] Embrugh crew
Declare they've got o' claes too few:
O' blankets they ha'e not enow.
"A pair apiece
They a' should ha'e; 'twill hardly do,
For folk's no beas's."

[1] pettish.

And now on this their just demand
They are determined for to stand,
And ere they flinch they will aff-hand
E'en gae their ways,
For never was there yet a land
But folk got claes.

The master now does carena be
Though he were red o' twa or three,
So, unexpectedly, does he
Gi'e his consent
To let them gang, and wages gi'e;
But they repent.

Quo' they, "The night is now grown dark,
And well eneugh we like your wark;
But Oh! it's hard that in our sark
We use sic cleading[1]!
For we're no used to siccan stark
And naked bedding."

[1] clothing.

[2] smooth-spoken.

And syne some sleekit-gabbit[2] wife
Declares, "she never likit strife;
For she was aye for a quiet life.
'Tis but ae night;
We'll e'en stay, (maybe get the rife[3]),
Till 'tis daylight."

[3] itch.

[4] drones, ineffective persons.

Some wally-dragles[4] pay for a',
Wha little dreamt o' this ava',
For they wi' scorn are set awa',
To their great shame.
The byword says, "Ill bairns are a'
Best heard at hame."

Now whan they a' to bed are gane,
Auld Seonet comes in sark alane,
Beseeching for a dram o' gin,
Or what you please;
For Duncan has a sare wame[5] ta'en
Wi' eating pease.

[5] sore belly.

At length they a' sleep very sound,
In slumber sweet and eke profound:
In idle dreams they ne'er abound
That ha'e sair wark;
Yet ilka morn are cheerfu' found
As ony lark.

[The week ends and the shearers get their wages and their "hook-penny" to the bargain, as is customary. Next week, as the harvest presses more and workfolk become scarce, there is grumbling and demand for higher wages. A shilling a day, it is reported, is being got at the West Port of Edinburgh. The farmer nevertheless holds out, keeping to his eightpence, and by and by the harvest ends; the "Maiden," or last handful, is cut, the "Winter," or last cartful is brought in, and all ends with the supper of the Harvest Home.]

GAVIN TURNBULL.

Fl. 1788.

One of the lesser lights of Ayrshire song who have suffered neglect in the bright contemporary blaze of Burns was Gavin Turnbull, weaver, poet, and comedian. Not the less, for the truth and ease of more than one of his compositions, he remains entitled to a place in the bead-roll of the singers.

The son of a tippling dyester from Hawick, who dearly loved a gill-stoup, a song, and a roystering company, the poet was born in Kilmarnock, and early apprenticed there to the trade of carpet weaving. He proved but an idle apprentice, however, being fonder of spouting Shakespeare and writing verses than of weaving carpets. For some time, in consequence, his dwelling was a forlorn garret, without furniture, and with only straw for a bed and a stone for a seat. Here, nevertheless, he indulged in all the glow of poetic fancy, describing to David Sillar, a kindred spirit, in all the charms of verse, his "wee housie snug and warm," where he sat spinning rhyme "by the chimla lug."

By and by he migrated, with the rest of his father's family, to Glasgow, and there, in 1788, he published a volume of "Poetical Essays," some of which are of no small merit, though they have been strangely lost sight of. Shortly after this publication he appears to have gone upon the stage, and in the character of comedian, when resident in Dumfries, he became an intimate acquaintance of Burns. By Burns several of Turnbull's songs, not included in his first volume, were sent to Thomson for his collection. In 1794 a further small pamphlet of "Poems, by Gavin Turnbull, comedian," was published. Little more is known of the jovial, luckless poet-comedian. In 1798, when Campbell wrote his *History of Poetry in Scotland*, Turnbull was still alive, but it is said he emigrated finally to America, and probably he died there. The few particulars extant regarding his life have been preserved in *The Ayrshire Contemporaries of Burns*.

MAY.

Begin, sweet lass, a merry lay,
And sing the bonnie month of May,
When chantin' birds, on ilka spray
And hawthorn sing,
And larks salute the rising day
On restless wing.

And hark, the cuckoo through his throat
Pours out a sweet but simple note,
The gowdspink, in her painted coat
And trim array,
Gars echo answer, frae the grot,
The praise of May.

Now wha wad tine this joyous hour,
Beneath the drowsy monarch's power,
To snore and sleep in lockit bower,
While, sad to tell,
Terrific dreams our peace devour,
Like hags of hell?

The sun, emerging frae the sea,
Lifts up his radiant head on hie;
Mirk clouds and dusky shadows flee
Before his beam;
The tap of ilka tower and tree
Like siller gleam.

A' nature blooming charms the view—
The greensward earth, and welkin blue,
The bent, refreshed wi' morning dew,
And spreading thorn,
Gay vernal flowers, of motley hue,
The braes adorn.

The music of the westlin breeze,
That soughs[1] amang the nodding trees,
The drowsy croon of busy bees
In waxen cell,
Can lull the passions into ease,
And cares expel.

[1] sighs.

Sweet smile the woodland and the plain;
Joy fills the heart of ilka swain,
And rouses up the village train
By creek o' dawn;
Eident[2] on rustic toils again
They seek the lawn.

[2] diligent.

Furth frae the theekit[1] cot is seen
The landwart[2] lasses, braw and clean,
Skiff lightly o'er the dewy green.
Withouten art,
In native innocence, I ween,
They charm the heart.

[1] thatched.
[2] rustic.

Now come, my pleasure-loving maid,
And tent[3] the beauties of the shade—
The thicket gaudily arrayed
In rokelay green,
And burnies hurling through the glade
Their waters sheen[4].

[3] note.
[4] shining, fair.

Now is the time for those who love
To woo the muses in the grove,
Or wi' the nymph, sweet Fancy, rove
Her flowery way:
Then come, ye tunefu' swains, and prove
The joys of May!

NANCY.

THE fop may praise the city belle
In verse that charms the fancy, O;
Wi' simple croon I'll please mysel',
And praise my bonnie Nancy, O;
Wha, without dress, and foreign aid,
Which at the first alarm ye, O,
In hamely russet weeds arrayed,
Like magic art can charm ye, O.

Sic native dignity and grace,
But[1] other arts, invite ye, O;
Sic modest looks adorn her face,
And gentle smiles delight ye, O.
Her blushing cheeks the crimson scorn;
Her e'en sae clear and glancy, O;
The rose refreshed wi' dews of morn
Is nought compared wi' Nancy, O.

Then cease to muse, ye witless beaux!
Nae mair torment the fancy, O;
But join wi' me, and sing wi' glee
The praise of lovely Nancy, O!

[1] Without.

TO MELANCHOLY.

MAIDEN of the downcast eye,
Who, when evening draweth nigh,
Windest oft thy devious way
Beneath the sober twilight grey,
Pursuing still the lonely road
By human footsteps seldom trod,
By the hills or shady woods,
Dreary dells and haunted floods,
By the churchyard's lonely bound,
Wand'ring o'er the cheerless ground,
Where oft, as vulgar stories tell,
From aisles the midnight spectres yell,
Or where some stalwart ruins nod,
Of wealth and grandeur once th' abode,
Delighted with the dismal howl
Of ravens and the screaming owl:—
Come Melancholy, sober maid,
In all thy winning charms arrayed!—
Come, sober nymph, nor once disdain
To take me in thy pensive train!

GENIUS.

ARE those the haunts where genius loves to dwell?—
Those dreary, mournful, melancholy shades?
You who have trod the doleful mazes tell
What heart-corroding anguish here invades.

I thought the Muses loved the flowery road
Where joy and pleasure unmolested stray,
Where gentle peace had fixed her sweet abode,
And mild contentment held eternal sway.

Beneath the shade, in careless ease reclined,
I thought the Poets passed their jocund hours,
While tides of sweet ideas filled each mind,
Like happy souls in blest Elysian bowers.

Let sad experience tell the mournful truth—
How studious vigils are the source of woe,
How thought impairs the rosy bloom of youth,
And makes the tears of heartfelt anguish flow.

There Melancholy sits, with lurid eye,
While sad ideas rankle in the soul;
Grieved disappointment oft demands a sigh,
And doth the thoughts of future joy control.

I see the sons of jollity and joy
  The genial hours in revelry beguile;
No tender feelings can their mirth annoy,
  No sad ideas check the dimpling smile.

In vain I turn the page of ancient lore,
  To lull the furious demon of despair;
In vain, divine philosophy explore,
  To dissipate this weary load of care.

For pale disease, the sad result of those,
  Impairs the pleasures that delight the heart;
Terrific dreams infest my short repose,
  And death seems threat'ning with uplifted dart.

JOHN HAMILTON.

1761-1814.

One of the little knot of poets who honourably shared with Burns in contributing to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* was for many years a music-seller and teacher of music in North Bridge Street, Edinburgh. Little further is known of him except that he is said to have married one of his pupils, "a young lady of fortune and rank," against the will of her parents, that he was a close friend of Sibbald the bookseller, author of the *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, and that he was of some service to Scott in the compilation of the *Border Minstrelsy*. He was the composer of a number of beautiful Scottish airs, and the author of several fine songs. Perhaps his best known performance was his addition of two stanzas to Burns' song, "Of a' the airts the wind can blaw." So admirable are these that Cunningham, Lockhart, and Professor Wilson took them for the work of Burns himself. Hamilton's song, "Up in the mornin' early," was an improvement upon the verses on the same theme by Burns. The tune of this song is very old. According to Dr. Rogers in the "Modern Scottish Minstrel," it was published in 1652 by John Hilton as the third voice in a "Northern Catch," was adopted by Gay for one of the songs in his "Beggars' Opera," and was a favourite with Queen Mary, consort of William III.

OH, BLAW, YE WESTLIN' WINDS!

Oh, blaw, ye westlin' winds, blaw saft
  Amang the leafy trees!
Wi' gentle gale, frae muir and dale
  Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
  That's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae blink of her wad banish care,
  Sae lovely is my Jean.

What sighs and vows amang the knowes
  Ha'e passed atween us twa!
How fain to meet, how wae to part,
  That day she gaed awa'!
The Powers abune can only ken,
  To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
  As my sweet lovely Jean.

UP IN THE MORNIN' EARLY.

CAULD blaws the wind frae north to south,
The drift is drifting sairly;
The sheep are cowerin' in the heugh[1];
Oh, sirs, it's winter fairly!
Now, up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
I'd rather gae supperless to my bed
Than rise in the mornin' early.

Loud roars the blast amang the woods,
And tirls[2] the branches barely;
On hill and house hear how it thuds!
The frost is nippin' sairly.
Now, up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
To sit a' nicht wad better agree
Than rise in the mornin' early.

The sun peeps ower yon southland hills,
Like ony timorous carlie;
Just blinks awee, then sinks again;
And that we find severely.
Now, up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
When snaw blaws in at the chimley cheek
Wha'd rise in the mornin' early?

[1] cleft, den.

[2] strips.

Nae linties lilt on hedge or bush:
Poor things, they suffer sairly;
In cauldrife quarters a' the nicht,
A' day they feed but sparely.
Now, up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
A pennyless purse I wad rather dree[1]
Than rise in the mornin' early.

[1] suffer.

A cosie house and canty wife
Aye keep a body cheerly;
And pantries stowed wi' meat and drink,
They answer unco rarely.
But up in the mornin'—na, na, na!
Up in the mornin' early!
The gowans maun glint on bank and brae
When I rise in the mornin' early.

MISS FORBES' FAREWELL TO BANFF.

FAREWELL, ye fields and meadows green!
The blest retreats of peace and love:
Aft have I, silent, stolen from hence,
With my young swain awhile to rove.
Sweet was our walk, more sweet our talk,
Among the beauties of the spring;
And aft we'd lean us on a bank
To hear the feathered warblers sing.

The azure sky, the hills around,
Gave double beauty to the scene;
The lofty spires of Banff in view,
On every side the waving grain.
The tales of love my Jamie told
In such a saft and moving strain,
Have so engaged my tender heart,
I'm loth to leave the place again.

But if the Fates will be sae kind
As favour my return once more,
For to enjoy the peace of mind
In those retreats I had before.
Now, farewell Banff! the nimble steeds
Do bear me hence—I must away;
Yet time, perhaps, may bring me back,
To part nae mair from scenes so gay.

ANDREW SCOTT.

1757-1839.

Born at Bowden village, behind the Eildon Hills in Roxburghshire, the sweet singer of rural content began life and ended it as a peasant in his native parish. Midway in his life, however, he had a sufficiently dramatic experience. He served as a private soldier through five campaigns of the American war, and was with the army under Cornwallis which surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia. It was in much the same circumstances with him as with James Hogg a quarter of a century later that the poetic instinct was awakened. As a boy of twelve he was herding in the fields, when a copy of Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," which had come into his hands, set his heart singing with the melody of pastoral delights. At a later day, when cantoned on Staten Island, he made songs—"Betsy Rosoe," "The Oak Tree," and others, and sang them to his comrades. And though for seventeen years after his marriage he toiled tuneless in the Bowden fields for the support of his wife and family, in later life he found leisure to "tune his reed" once more. Between 1805 and 1826 he published at Edinburgh, Kelso, and Jedburgh no fewer than five collections of his poetry. His verse gained him the recognition of Sir Walter Scott, Lockhart, and other lights of literary Edinburgh of that day, but he died as he had lived, a humble labourer, and bedral of the parish, where his ashes rest.

RURAL CONTENT:

OR, THE MUIRLAND FARMER.

I'M now a gude farmer, I've acres o' land,
And my heart aye loups light when I'm viewin' o't;
And I ha'e servants at my command,
And twa dainty cowts[1] for the pleughin' o't.
My farm is a snug ane, lies high on a muir,
The muircocks and plivers aft skirl at my door,
And whan the sky lowers I'm aye sure o' a shower
To moisten my land for the pleughin' o't.

[1] colts.

Leeze[1] me on the mailin that's fa'en to my share;
It tak's sax meikle bowes[2] for the sawin' o't.
I've sax braid acres for pasture, and mair,
And a dainty bit bog for the mawin' o't.
A spence[3] and a kitchen my mansionhouse gi'es;
I've a canty[4] wee wifie to daut[5] when I please,
Twa bairnies, twa callans[6] that skelp ower the leas,
And they'll soon can assist at the pleughin' o't.

My biggin' stands sweet on this south-slopin' hill,
And the sun shines sae bonnily beamin' on't,
And past my door trots a clear prattlin' rill,
Frae the loch, whare the wild ducks are swimmin' on't.
And on its green banks, on the gay simmer days,
My wifie trips barefit, a-bleachin' her claes,
And on the dear creature wi' rapture I gaze,
While I whistle and sing at the pleughin' o't.

To rank amang farmers I ha'e meikle pride,
But I maunna speak high when I'm tellin' o't.
How brawly I strut on my shelty to ride,
Wi' a sample to show for the sellin' o't.
In blue worset boots that my auld mither span,
I've aft been fu' vaunty[7] sin' I was a man,
But now they're flung by, and I've bought cordovan,
And my wifie ne'er grudged me a shillin' o't.

Sae now whan to kirk or to market I gae,
My weelfare what need I be hidin' o't?
In braw leather boots shinin' black as the slae
I dink[8] me to try the ridin' o't.

[1] Lief is, "commend me to."
[2] bolls.
[3] parlour.
[4] cheerful.
[5] pet.
[6] boys.
[7] vain.
[8] dress neatly.

Last towmond[1] I sell't off four bowes[2] o' gude bere,
And thankfu' I was, for the victual was dear,
And I cam' hame wi' spurs on my heels shinin' clear,
I had sic gude luck at the sellin' o't.

[1] twelvemonth, year.
[2] bolls.

Now hairst-time is ower, and a fig for the laird,
My rent's now secure for the toilin' o't;
My fields a' are bare, and my craps in the yard,
And I'm nae mair in doubts o' the spoilin' o't.
Now welcome gude weather, or wind, or come weet,
Or bauld ragin' Winter, wi' hail, snaw, or sleet;
Nae mair can he draigle[3] my crap 'mang his feet,
Nor wraik his mischief, and be spoilin' o't.

[3] trail and dirty.

And on the dowf[4] days, when loud hurricanes blaw,
Fu' snug in the spence I'll be viewin' o't,
And jink[5] the rude blast in my rush-theekit[6] ha',
When fields are sealed up frae the pleughin' o't.
My bonnie wee wifie, the bairnies, and me,
The peat-stack and turf-stack our Phœbus shall be,
Till day close the scowl o' its angry e'e,
And we'll rest in gude hopes o' the pleughin' o't.

[4] gloomy.
[5] dodge, escape.
[6] rush-thatched.

And whan the year smiles, and the laverocks sing,
My man Jock and me shall be doin' o't;
He'll thrash, and I'll toil on the fields in the Spring,
And turn up the soil at the pleughin' o't.
And whan the wee flowerets begin then to blaw
The laverock, the peaseweep, and skirling pickmaw
Shall hiss the bleak winter to Lapland awa',
Then we'll ply the blithe hours at the sawin' o't.

And whan the birds sing on the sweet simmer morn,
My new crap, I'll keek at the growin' o't,
Whan hares niffer love 'mang the green bairdit corn,
And dew draps the tender blades shewin' o't.
On my brick o' fallow my labours I'll ply,
And view on their pasture my twa bonnie kye,
Till hairst-time again circle round us wi' joy,
Wi' the fruits o' the sawin' and pleughin' o't.

Nor need I to envy our braw gentlefolks,
Wha fash na their thumbs wi' the sawin' o't,
Nor e'er slip their fine silken hands i' the pocks,
Nor foul their black shoon wi' the pleughin' o't;
For, pleased wi' the little that fortune has lent,
The seasons row round us in rural content;
We've aye milk and meal, and our laird gets his rent,
And I whistle and sing at the pleughin' o't.

ANDREW SHIRREFS.

1762-1800.

One of the latest eighteenth century imitators of Allan Ramsay was the son of David Shirrefs, a wright or builder of considerable substance in Aberdeen. One brother of the poet became minister of the principal church in his native town, and another, sometime Sheriff-Clerk Depute, was latterly President of the Society of Advocates. Andrew, however, owing to a physical infirmity, adopted the business of a bookseller, and his shop, much like that of Ramsay in Edinburgh, became the literary lounge of the town. The "little decrepid body with some abilities," as Burns describes him, started a newspaper which came early to grief, and for some years carried on the *Caledonian Magazine*. In 1790, when the magazine stopped, he removed to Edinburgh, and published a volume of "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect." The most ambitious piece in this volume is a pastoral play, "Jamie and Bess," which closely follows the manner and type of characters of "The Gentle Shepherd," and which was played three times in Aberdeen and once in Edinburgh. Shirrefs' most characteristic production, however, is his well-known song, "A Cogie o' Yill."

The poet's latter days were unfortunate. He went to London in 1798, and appears, from the omission of his name from the will of his cousin, a wealthy Jamaica planter, to have died before 1801. An account of his life is given in Walker's *Bards of Bon-Accord*.

A COGIE O' YILL.

[1] A small wooden bowl of ale.
[2] small quantity.

A COGIE o' yill[1] and a pickle[2] ait-meal,
And a dainty wee drappie o' whiskey,
Was our forefathers' dose for to sweel down their brose,
And keep them aye cheery and frisky.

Then hey for the whiskey, and hey for the meal,
And hey for the cogie, and hey for the yill;
Gin ye steer a' thegither they'll do unco weel
To keep a chiel cheery and brisk aye.

When I see our Scots lads, wi' their kilts and cockades,
That sae aften ha'e loundered our foes, man,
I think to mysel' on the meal and the yill,
And the fruits o' our Scottish kail brose, man.
Then hey for the whiskey, &c.

When our brave Highland blades, wi' their claymores and plaids,
In the field drive like sheep a' our foes, man;
Their courage and power spring frae this, to be sure,
They're the noble effects o' the brose, man.
Then hey for the whiskey, &c.

But your spindle-shanked sparks, wha sae ill fill
their sarks,
Your pale-visaged milksops and beaux, man;
I think, when I see them, 'twere kindness to gi'e
them
A cogie o' yill or o' brose, man.
Then hey for the whiskey, &c.

What John Bull despises our better sense prizes;
He denies eatin' blanter[1] ava', man;
But by eatin' o' blanter his mare's grown, I'll
warrant her,
The manliest brute o' the twa, man.
Then hey for the whiskey, &c.

[1] oats?

WILLIAM BEATTIE.

1762-1815.

In the little cluster of men of talent who made Aberdeen a place of some literary note a hundred years ago, probably the genius most native, most racy of the common life, was the "Heckler Poet." Not much is known of this poetical dresser of flax. A roystering soul, who believed in the bottle as a cure for all care, he lived in one of the old wooden houses of the Gallowgate, opposite the Vennel, in Aberdeen, and lived from hand to mouth by working in a factory close by. His father is believed to have had a small property at Inverurie, and to have left the poet a legacy of £100. This the latter very shortly ran through, drinking most of it in company with a set of jolly companions whose haunt was a famous taproom in Luxemburg's Close. On one occasion, it is said, he was passing a knot of women round a well in the Gallowgate, when one of them remarked to her neighbour, "That's the man that drank the hunner pound." "Aye, wifie," said Beattie, wheeling round with a laugh, "and no slockened yet."

When Shirrefs started the *Caledonian Magazine*, Beattie sent him a rhymed epistle enclosing a poem "On Mortality," and among other contributions he followed it up with his "Winter's Night." In 1801 he published at Aberdeen a small collection of his poems under the title of "Fruits of Time Parings." The little volume, which has been several times reprinted, contains, among others, three pieces—"The Yule Feast," "The Winter's Night," and "The Alewife Coaxing her Customers," which, for their homely realism and happy touches as pictures of rural life, entitle their author to rank in the immediate following of Fergusson and Burns.

Most of Beattie's poems, along with the *chef d'œuvre* of another Aberdeen poet, were coolly altered and appropriated in a volume of "Poems by Alexander Beattie, A.M., of the Royal Academy, Tain," in 1832.

THE WINTER'S NIGHT.

Ye gentle folk 'at win[1] in touns,
At canty[2] fires, in well-boxed bouns[3],
When blust'ring hailstanes rattle,
Consider how the village swain,
Unsheltered, on the open plain,
Maun bide the bickerin' brattle[4].

1 dwell.
2 cheerful.
3 bounds.
4 rattling attack.

Or if perforce of endrift styth[5],
He is obliged to seek a lyth[6]
Amo' the byres and barns,
For fear the poor dumb brutes sud smore[7],
He staps wi' strae ilk navus bore[8],
And ilka crevice darns[9].

5 strong driving snow.
6 shelter.
7 smother.
8 knot-hole.
9 hides.

Syne after he has done his best,
The sheep sought hame, and a' at rest,
He bouns[10] him to the house,
And sits him down upo' the bink[11],
And plaits a theet[12], or mends a mink[13],
To sair[14] an after use.

10 sets forward.
11 settle.
12 trace-rope.
13 noose.
14 serve.

The young-man now casts on his plaid,
To gang and seek an ewe that's strayed;
But has a tryste wi' Nell.

He thinks they winna be foun' out;
But ere a twalmonth come about,
Young Jock'll maybe tell.

Sae blythe's he lilts out-o'er the lea,
Wi' bonnet cocked somewhat ajee,
And whistlin' Nelly Symon;
Between hands thinkin' wi' himsel'
How blest he'll be when he and Nell
Are linked in bands of Hymen.

And Nell comes out to milk the kye,
Glowering atweese[1] her and the sky,
To see gin he be comin';
She sees him leeshin'[2] up the craft,
And thinks her whittle's i' the shaft,—
I wish her joy, poor 'oman.

[1] Gazing between

[2] stepping out.

But now they're met, we'se leave them there,
And back again we sall repair;
The sky begins to darken;
Gin you or I were i' their plight,
I guess we would no' think it right,
Were ony ane to harken.

The shankers hamphise[3] the fireside;
The little anes play at seek and hide
Ahint the kists and tables;
The farmer sits anent the light,
And reads a piece o' Wallace Wight
Or maybe Æsop's Fables.

[3] The stocking-knitters surround.

And little Pate sits i' the nook,
And but-a-house[1] dare hardly look,
But had[2] and snuff the fir[3];
And whan the farmer tines[4] the line,
He says, "Yer light casts little shine,—
Had in the candle, sir."

[1] towards the outer apartment of the house.
[2] hold.
[3] fir-candle, moss-fir splinter used for light.
[4] loses.

The goodwife sits and spins a thread,
And now and then, to red[5] her head,
She tak's a pickle snuff;
And first she counts how meikle tow,
And syne how meikle carded woo'
She'll need for apron stuff.

[5] rid, set in order.

At last she cries, "Gi'e o'er yer ploys[6],
Ye geets[7], or else mak' some less noise!
I think ye may be douce[8].
Ou! gaen like gaunties[9] in a stye!
The folk'll think, 'at's gaen by,
We keep a bordel house[10].

[6] plays, frolics.
[7] "gets," children.
[8] sober.
[9] going like pigs.
[10] brothel.

"I'll wager, gin I need to rise,
I'll shortly gar you turn the guize[11];
Ye filthy, fashous teds[12]!
See, here's yer father comin' but[13];
I'll wad[14] my lug, he'll teach ye wit!
Come, come, and mak' for beds."

[11] play.
[12] troublesome bairns.
[13] out of the inner room.
[14] wager.

Syne she sets by the spinning wheel,
Tak's them in-o'er, and warms them weel,
And pits them to their hammock;

Syne haps them up, and says, "Now boys,
Lie still and sleep, and mak' nae noise;"
And bribes them wi' a bannock.

Syne she comes ben the house, and says,
"Dear me, that stoun's amo' my taes
Will pit my heart awa'!
That weary corns gi'e me sic pain,
I ken we'll ha'e a blash[1] o' rain,
Or else a skirl[2] o' snaw.

"What keeps that hallyrakus scum[3],
The tailor, 'at he winna come,
And men' the bairns' duds?
He promised aught days syne, I'm sear[4].
Foul fa' him, gin I had him here
But he sud get his thuds.

"They never had sae meikle need;
I'm really feart they'll get their dead,
Their duds are turned sae auld;
And, silly[5] things, they ha'e na wit,
A moment i' the house to sit;
And now the weather's cauld.

"Believe me, sirs, troth, I admire
What comes o' folk 'at's scant o' fire;
For really this night's thirlin'[6];
I never 'maist fand sic a frost;
Troth, I believe my taes will roast
And yet my heels are dirlin'[7].

[1] deluge.
[2] blast.
[3] hare-brained fellow.
[4] sure.
[5] frail.
[6] piercing.
[7] tingling.

"Sirs, I believe it's wearin' late;
Lat's see in-o'er the ladle, Pate,
And ye'se get out a castock[1].
Gang roun' about by Geordy's back,
Ye'll get it lyin' i' the rack,
Aside the cutty[2] basket.

[1] pith of cabbage stem.

[2] short spoon.

"O Peter, ye're a careless loun!
What sorrow's that ye're dingin' doun?
That's surely something broken.
I think ye might tak' better care;
Ye ken we ha'e nae things to spare:
They're nae sae easy gotten."

The merry merchant[3] jokes the lasses,
And gars them trow he kens what passes
Atweesh them and their lads;
And reads their fortunes o' the cards,
Weirds[4] some to farmers, some to lairds,
To some he weirds cockades.

[3] *i.e.* pedler.

[4] Fates.

But, wi' his cunnin' magic spell,
He weirds the maiden[5] to himsel',
And gi'es her twa-three needles,
Or buttons for her Sunday's sleeves—
Delf set in tin, which she believes
Is silver set wi' pebbles.

[5] daughter of the house.

The merchant kens what he's about;
He has nae will to lie throughout,
Or yet to tramp the gutter.

He's nae a stranger to his trade;—
For this he gets the chamber bed,
And raff[1] o' brose and butter.

[1] plenty.

But now the lave are i' the bung[2],
And Kate says, "See, ye stupid slung[3],
What way ye've fyled my curch[4]!
Ye think auld Bobby's at your will;
But faith I'm red[5], for a' your skill
He'll leave you i' the lurch

[2] the rest are in the pet.
[3] tall lank booby.
[4] soiled my kerchief.
[5] advised.

"Just keep yer hands upo' yoursel'.
Sirs, fand ye ever sic a smell
O' brimstane and nit saw[6]?
Feich! dear be here! I b'lieve I'll spue.
Troth, laddie, they that tig[7] wi' you,
Will soon ha'e cause to claw.

[6] nut salve.
[7] touch, dally.

"Jean, we'll need to wear[8] hame, I doubt;
We'll baith be prann'd[9] for biding out.
Na, lassie, we're a fright.
The shame be on's for ae clean rag,
And washing's naething but a drag,
We ha'e sae short daylight.

[8] make for.
[9] reprehended.

"Though we were dressed, this creeshy woo'[10]
Wad soon rub out the mangle[11] hue,
Ye never saw sic trash.
We tak' it out frae Robbie More,
But troth, we'll need to gi'e him o'er,
He's really sic a fash[12]."

[10] greazy wool.
[11] calender.
[12] trouble.

The gaudman[1] sits and toasts his nose,
Or awkwardly heelcaps his hose,
Or mak's yoke-sticks o' rodden[2].
Auld Luckydaddy[3] winds at brutches[4],
And Granny tells them tales o' witches,
Until the kail be sodden[5].

[1] ploughman.
[2] rowan, mountain ash.
[3] Grandfather.
[4] straw ropes.
[5] broth be cooked.

Syne quoth the horseman, "I suppose
It's wearin' late; we'll ha'e our brose.
I saw the seven starns,
Whan I gaed forth to sup the naigs,
Hyne[6], o'er ayont the millstane craigs,
Aboon the Parson's barns.

[6] Hence.

"The morn's *gentle* Christmas day,
As rattlin' Robbie used to say,
And we ha'e scarce ae starn[7]
O' fardel[8] strae laid by 'gain Yeel;
But ere the sky, gin I be weel,
I sall be i' the barn."

[7] small quantity.
[8] bundled, thrashed.

Wi' this the farmer says the grace,
Wi' bonnet up afore his face;
And whan the brose are suppit,
They mak' for bed, and them 'at's dry
Just tak' a drink, as they gae by
The cauler[9] water bucket.

[9] fresh.

And still, as Sabbath night comes roun',
The chapter's read, wi' holy soun';
And, for their past offences,

The chapter read, they join in prayer;—
But I half think, wi' some 'at's there
It's naething but pretences.

For Jock tak's Jenny by the snout,
And Jenny halflins[1] snickers out,
Syne sic a cushle-mushle[2]
Is heard, that ane wad really think
Some pigs had got behind the bink,
Or in beneath a bushel.

Thus does the rustic's evening end.
Saft slumbers now their cares suspend;
Dark silence fills the house:
Unless slee badrins[3], on the watch,
Intent his little prey to catch,
Surprise a hungry mouse.

Till thrice the cock extends his wings,
And thrice th' unwelcome tidings brings,
Of Sol's approaching light;
The lads, unwilling yet to stir,
Fire aff their morning guns wi' vir,
And gaunt[4] wi' a' their might.

At length the farmer steals out-o'er
Frae Kitty's side. He hears her snore,
And thinks 't would be a sin
To wake her, sae the host he crubs[5],
And frae his hose rubs aff the dubs[6],
Pits on wi' little din.

[1] half.
[2] low whispering.
[3] grimalkin.
[4] yawn.
[5] the cough he curbs.
[6] mud.

Syne he'll gang forth and look about,
And raise the lads, ye need no' doubt,
To yoke them to the flail.
But soon as he sets forth his nose
The first thing meets him is a dose
Of styth endrift and hail.

"Bless me! it's been a dismal night,"
He says; "I wish I may be right,
I hear the stirkies roustin'[1].
Rise, boys, you'll sleep awa' your sight,
Ye've sleepit till it's fair[2] daylight,
For a' your last night's voustin'[3].

"Weel fells us 'at's in biggit bouns[4]!
I pity them 'at's far frae touns[5];
They canno' do but smore;
For mark nor meith[6] ye wadna ken—
The greenswaird how[7], and seggy[8] den
Are streiked[9] even-o'er.

"O haste ye, boys, look forth and see
The Tap o' Noth and Bennachie,
What heaps o' snaw lie o' them.
Lord help the tenants i' the hills!
For neither ploughs, nor kilns, nor mills,
I'm sure, can gae amo' them.

"The hills look white, the woods look blue;
Nae hidlins[10] for a hungry ewe—
They're sae beset wi' drift.

[1] bellowing.
[2] quite.
[3] boasting.
[4] built dwellings.
[5] steadings.
[6] landmark.
[7] hollow.
[8] sedgy.
[9] smoothed.
[10] shelter.

We'll gi'e the sheep a rip[1] o' corn
The day, and aiblins[2] gin the morn
They'll a' win forth to shift.

"And Jock and Tam, ye'll yoke and thrash,
For troth, I dinna think we'll fash
To yoke a plough the day.
As Bruxy says, 'Gin ye had heal',
I think ye'll ha'e laid by gin Yeel
A fouth[3] o' fordel strae.'

"And Pate, as soon's ye get your pottage,
Ye'll look gin there be ony stoppage
About the Litster's burn.
The horse are gaen daft for water;
Gin she be closed, we maun be at her,
Afore we do a turn.

"And are ye hearin', Geordy Lithy?
Ye'll tak' the cou'ter to the smithy,
And get her laid and sharped;
And haste ye hame afore't be night,
Ye ken ye winna ha'e moonlight;
And mind to get her marked.

"The smith 'll ken the mark himsel'—
Twa double letters, T and L,
And mak' it right and tight.
And tell him I'll be o'er the morn,
And he and I sall ha'e a horn,
Gin ilka thing had[4] right."

[1] handful unthrashed.
[2] mayhap.
[3] plenty.
[4] hold.

Now a' thing's settled for the time,
Nor needs the farmer sair repine,
Wi' a' his girnels[1] fu';
But what comes o' the cottar folk,
And sic as ha'e nae fordel stock
But just frae hand to mou'?

[1] granaries.

For they 'at ha'e a gueed peat-stack,
And claise to hap[2] baith bed and back,
I think ha'e nae grite pingle[3]—
Wi' a brown bickerfu' to graff[4],
To gar baith cauld and care had aff,
Afore a bleezin' ingle.

[2] heap, clothe.
[3] difficulty.
[4] bury.

ALEXANDER WILSON.

1766-1813.

More famous though he certainly is in other fields, the great American ornithologist is also a claimant for a place of honour among the poets of his native country. Born at Paisley, the son of a small distiller, and himself a weaver by trade, Wilson appears, from the first, to have had more taste for nature than for sedentary labour. For a time he became a pedlar, and along with his chapman's wares he hawked copies of the first volume of his poetry, published in 1789. In 1792 appeared anonymously his most famous piece, "Watty and Meg," a narrative poem which, for its humour and realistic truth, has with justice been likened to a picture by Teniers or Ostade.

Shortly after this publication Wilson became involved in the disputes of the weaving trade in Paisley, and for some poetic satires, held to be libellous, which he wrote upon certain "sweating" masters of the craft, he suffered a short imprisonment in Paisley jail, and was compelled to burn the production with his own hands at the town's cross. Dispirited by this experience he determined to emigrate; and by dint of severe toil and stint—living on so little as a shilling a week, he saved enough in four months to carry him to the United States. Throughout the voyage he slept on deck, and on arrival had to borrow a small sum to reach Philadelphia. Afterwards, however, as weaver, pedlar, copperplate printer, and schoolmaster, he procured a better subsistence, and was finally engaged as sub-editor of Rees' Cyclopædia. While a schoolmaster he had become intimately acquainted with Bartram, the American naturalist, and, developing at the same time a singular aptitude in the preservation and drawing of birds, he undertook long pedestrian rambles to increase his collections. During one excursion he descended the Ohio in a skiff, alone, for over 600 miles. After completing eight volumes of his great American Ornithology, worn out by his extraordinary efforts, he was attacked by dysentery and died. His work, however, with additions by later hands, especially those of Charles Lucien Bonaparte, remains the standard on its subject; the plates, which, owing to the primitive condition of art in the United

States at the time, he engraved and coloured with his own hands, would themselves furnish an enduring monument to his name.

Collected editions of Wilson's poems were published at Paisley in 1816 and at Belfast in 1845, but the most complete is that by the Rev. A. B. Grosart, published at Paisley in 1876.

"Watty and Meg," from the popularity of its subject—the reform of a scolding wife by a threat of leaving her—has generally been placed first among Wilson's compositions. Notwithstanding its high merits, however, of vividness and realism, it is handicapped heavily by the four-lined trochaic measure in which it is written, and it does not appear unjust to say that it contains nothing which might not have been as well expressed in prose. The best qualities of Wilson's genius—the graphic touches by which whole scenes of the peasant life in Scotland are brought vividly before the eye, and a happiness of epithet which gives the freshness of individuality to his work—are to be found, with a higher quality of art, in his slightly longer piece, "The Laurel Disputed."

THE LAUREL DISPUTED.

Delivered in the Pantheon, at Edinburgh, on Thursday, April 14, 1791, on the question—"Whether have the exertions of Allan Ramsay or Robert Fergusson done more honour to Scottish Poetry?"

BEFORE ye a' ha'e done, I'd humbly crave
To speak twa words or three amang the lave;
No for mysel', but for an honest carl
Wha's seen richt mony changes i' the warl',
But is sae blate[1], down here he durstna come, [1] bashful.
Lest, as he said, his fears might ding[2] him dumb; [2] drive.
And then he's frail—sae begged me to repeat
His simple thoughts about this fell[3] debate. [3] keen.
He gi'ed me this lang scroll; 'tis e'en right brown;
I'se let you hear't as he has set it down.

Last ouk[1] our Elspa, wi' some creels o' eggs,
And three fat earocks[2] fastent by the legs,
Gaed down to Embrugh; caft[3] a new bane kaim,
And brought a warl' o' news and clashes[4] hame.
For she's scarce out a day, and gets a text,
But I'm dung deaf wi' clatter a' the next.
She'll tell a' what she heard frae en' to en',
Her cracks[5] to wives, wives' cracks to her again;
Till wi' quo' I's, quo' she's, and so's, her skirl[6]
Sets my twa lugs a-ringing like a gir'le[7].
'Mang ither ferlies[8] whilk my kimmer[9] saw,
Was your prent paper batter't on the wa'.
She said she kentna rightly what it meant,
But saw some words o' gowd and poets in't.
This gart me glower; sae aff sets I my lane,
To Daniel Reid's, an auld frien' o' my ain.
He gets the *News*, and tald me that ye'd hecht[10],
A daud[11] o' gowd, on this same Fursday nicht,
To him wha'd show, in clinking verses drest,
Gin Ramsay's sangs, or Fergusson's were best.
Troth, I was glad to hear ye war sae kind
As keep our slee-tongued billies in your mind;
And though our Elspa ca'd me mony a gowk[12]
To think to speak amang sae mony folk,
I gat my staff, pat on my bonnet braid,
And best blue breeks, that war but fernyear[13] made;
A saxpence too, to let me in bedene[14],
And thir auld spentacles to help my een;
Sae I'm come here, in houps ye'll a' agree
To hear a frank auld kintra man like me.
In days whan Dryden sang ilk bonnie morn,

[1] week.
[2] young fowls.
[3] bought.
[4] gossip.
[5] talks.
[6] scream.
[7] iron baking plate.
[8] marvels.
[9] comrade.
[10] promised.
[11] lump.
[12] fool.
[13] last year.
[14] presently.

And Sandy Pope began to tune his horn,
Whan chiels round Lon'on chanted a' fu' thrang,
But poor auld Scotland sat without a sang,
Droll Will Dunbar frae flyting[1] than was freed,
And Douglas too, and Kennedy were dead,
And nane were left in hamely cracks to praise
Our ain sweet lasses, or our ain green braes;
Far aff our gentles for their poets flew,
And scorned to own that Lallan[2] sangs they knew;
Till Ramsay rase. O blithesome, hearty days,
When Allan tuned his chanter[3] on the braes!
Auld Reekie than, frae blackest, darkest wa's,
To richest rooms, resounded his applause;
And whan the nights were dreary, lang, and dark,
The beasts a' fother't and the lads frae wark,
The lasses wheels thrang birring[4] round the ingle,
The ploughman borin' wi' his brogs and lingle[5],
The herd's wires clicking ower the half-wrought hose,
The auld gudeman's e'en halflins[6] like to close,
The "Gentle Shepherd" frae the bole[7] was ta'en:—
Than sleep, I trow, was banished frae their e'en;
The crankiest than was kittled up to daffin'[8],
And sides and chafts[9] maist riven were wi' laughin'.
Sic war the joys his cracks could eith[10] afford
To peer or ploughman, barrowman[11] or lord;
In ilka clachan, wife, man, wean, and callan[12]
Crackit and sang frae morn to e'en o' Allan.

Learned folk, that lang in colleges and schools
Ha'e sookit learning to the vera hools[13],
And think that naething charms the heart sae weel's
Lang cracks o' gods, Greeks, Paradise, and deils;

[1] scolding. The name was applied to literary disputes fashionable in the time of James IV.
[2] lowland.
[3] the finger-pipe of the bagpipes
[4] busy whirring.
[5] awls and shoemaker's thread.
[6] half.
[7] square hole in wall.
[8] tickled up to gaiety.
[9] jaws.
[10] easily.
[11] burgess.
[12] boy.
[13] husks.

Their pows[1] are cram't sae fu' o' lear[2] and art,
Plain simple nature canna reach their heart;
But whare's the rustic that can, readin', see
Sweet Peggy skippin' ower the dewy lea,
Or, wishfu', stealin' up the sunny howe[3]
To gaze on Pate, laid sleeping on the knowe;
Or hear how Bauldy ventured to the deil,
How thrawn auld carlins skelpit[4] him afiel',
How Jude wi's hawk met Satan i' the moss,
How Skinflint grain't his pocks o' gowd to loss,
How bloody snouts and bloody beards war gi'en
To smiths and clowns at Christ's Kirk on the Green,
How twa daft herds, wi' little sense or havings[5],
Dined by the road on honest Hawkie's[6] leavings,
How Hab maist brak' the priest's back wi' a rung[7],
How deathless Addie died, and how he sung;—
Whae'er can thae (o' mae I needna speak)
Read tenty[8] ower at his ain ingle-cheek,
And no fin' something glowin' through his blood,
That gars his een glower through a siller flood,
May close the buik, poor cuif[9]! and lift his spoon,
His heart's as hard's the tackets in his shoon.

Lang saxty years ha'e whiten't ower this pow,
And mony a height I've seen, and mony a howe,
But aye when Elspa flate[10], or things gaed wrang,
Next to my pipe was Allie's sleekit[11] sang.
I thought him blither ilka time I read,
And mony a time wi' unco glee I've said
That ne'er in Scotland wad a chiel appear
Sae droll, sae hearty, sae confoundit queer,
Sae glibly-gabbit[12], or sae bauld again;—

[1] heads. [2] lore. [3] hollow. [4] cross-grained old women whacked. [5] manners. [6] cow's. [7] stave. [8] careful [9] fool. [10] scolded. [11] smooth, artful. [12] ready-mouthed.

I said, I swore't, but 'deed I was mista'en.
Up frae auld Reekie Fergusson begoud,
In fell[1] auld phrase that pleases aye the crowd,
To cheer their hearts whiles wi' an antrin[2] sang,
Whilk far and near round a' the kintra rang.
At first I thought the swankie[3] didna ill;
Again I glower't to hear him better still.
Bauld, slee, and sweet, his lines mair glorious grew,
Glowed round the heart, and glanced the soul out through.
But whan I saw the freaks o' Hallow Fair
Brought a' to view as plain as I'd been there,
And heard, wi' teeth maist chatterin' i' my head,
Twa kirkyard ghaists raised goustly[4] frae the dead;
Dazed Sandy greetin' for the thriftless wife,
How camsheugh[5] Sammy had been fed in Fife,
Poor Will and Geordy mournin' for their frien',
The Farmer's Ingle, and the cracks at e'en,
My heart cried out, while tears war drappin' fast,
O Ramsay, Ramsay, art thou beat at last?
Ae night the lift was skinklin' a' wi' starns[6],
I crossed the burn, and dauner't[7] through the cairns
Down to auld Andrew Ralston's o' Craigneuk,
To hear his thoughts, as he had seen the buik.
Andrew's a gey[8] droll haun',—ye'll aiblins[9] ken him?—
It mak's na, I had hecht[10] some sangs to len' him.
"Aweel," quo' I, as soon's I reek't the hallan[11],
"What think ye now o' our bit Embrugh callan?"
"Saf's man!" quo' Andrew, "yon's an unco chiel!
He surely has some dealings wi' the deil!

[1] strong.
[2] rare.
[3] young fellow.
[4] frightful.
[5] crooked.
[6] the heaven was twinkling with stars.
[7] sauntered.
[8] rather.
[9] perhaps.
[10] promised.
[11] reached the partition wall.

There' no a turn that ony o' us can work at,
At hame, or yet afiel', at kirk, or market,
But he describes't as pawkily and fell
As gin he'd been a kintra man himsel'.
Yestreen, I'm sure, beside our auld gudewife,
I never leugh as meikle a' my life,
To read the King's birthday's fell hurry-burry—
How draigle't pussey flies about like fury.
Faith! I ken that's a fact: the last birthday,
As I stood glowerin' up and down the way,
A dead cat's guts, before I could suspec',
Harl't[1] through the dirt, cam' clash about my neck;
And while, wi' baith my hauns, frae 'bout I took it,
Wi' perfect stink I thought I wad ha'e bockit[2].

[1] dragged.

[2] vomited.

"His stories, too, are tell't sae sleek and baul',
Ilk oily word rins jinking through the saul;
What he describes, before your e'en ye see't
As plain and lively as ye see that peat.
It's my opinion, John, that this young fallow
Excels them a', and beats auld Allan hallow,
And shows, at twenty-twa, as great a giftie
For painting just, as Allan did at fifty."

You, Mr. President, ken weel yoursel',
Better by far than kintra folks can tell,
That they wha reach the gleg, auldfarrant art[3]
In verse to melt and soothe and mend the heart—
To raise up joy, or rage, or courage keen,
And gar ilk passion sparkle in our een—
Sic chiels, whare'er they ha'e their ha' or hame,
Are true-blue bards, and wordy o' the name.
Sould ane o' thae, by lang experience, man,

[3] clever, sagacious art.

To spin out tales frae mony a pawky plan,
And set's a' laughing at his blauds[1] o' rhyme,
Wi' songs aft polished by the haun o' Time;
And should some stripling, still mair light o' heart,
A livelier humour to his cracks impart;
Wi' careless pencil draw, yet gar us stare,
To see our ain firesides and meadows there—
To see our thoughts, our hearts, our follies drawn,
And Nature's sel' fresh starting frae his haun—
Wad mony words, or speeches lang, be needed
To tell whase rhymes war best, wha clearest-headed?
Sits there within the four wa's o' this house,
Ae chield o' taste, droll, reprobate, or douce[2],
Whase blessed lugs ha'e heard young Rob himsel'—
Light as the lamb wha dances on the dell—
Lay aff his auld Scots crack wi' pawky glee,
And seen the fire that darted frae his e'e;
O let him speak! O let him try t' impart
The joys that than gushed headlang on his heart,
Whan ilka line, and ilka langsyne glower
Sets faes and friends and Pantheons in a roar!
Did e'er auld Scotland fin' a nobler pride
Through a' her veins and glowin' bosom glide,
Than when her Muse's dear young fav'rite bard,
Wi' her hale strength o' wit and fancy fired,
Rase frae the thrang, and kindlin' at the sound,
Spread mirth, conviction, truth, and rapture round?

To set Rob's youth and inexperience by,—
His lines are sweeter, and his flights mair high.
Allan, I own, may show far mair o' art,
Rob pours at once his raptures on the heart.

[1] large lots.

[2] sober.

[1] manages.

The first by labour mans[1] our breast to move,
The last exalts to ecstasy and love.
In Allan's verse sage sleeness we admire,
In Rob's the glow of fancy and of fire,
And genius bauld, that nought but deep distress,
And base neglect, and want, could e'er suppress.
O hard, hard fate!—but cease, thou friendly tear!
I daurna mourn my dear-lo'ed Bardie here,
Else I might tell how his great soul had soared,
And nameless ages wondered and adored,
Had friends been kind, and had not his young breath
And rising glory been eclipsed by Death.
But lest ower lang I lengthen out my crack,
And Epps be wearying for my coming back,
Let ane and a' here vote as they incline;
Frae heart and saul Rob Fergusson has mine.

CAROLINA OLIPHANT.

1766-1845.

Probably the larger half, certainly not the worse half, of the songs which celebrate the lost Jacobite cause in Scotland, are the work of James Hogg and of the lady who became Baroness Nairne. For the number and beauty of her lyrics of all kinds, among the song-writers of Scotland Lady Nairne is excelled only by Burns and rivalled only by Tannahill.

Born ten years after Culloden, of a family in the inner circle of Jacobitism, her memories and sympathies could not but be deeply coloured by the misfortunes of the House of Stuart. Her grandfather had taken part in the Rebellion of 1715, and both her grandfather and her father in that of 1745. On the later occasion her father was one of the first to join the Prince after his landing, and one of the last to exchange a word with him when Culloden was lost. In the "Auld House o' Gask," in Perthshire, where she was born, her grandfather had entertained Prince Charles, and her grandmother had cut a lock from the Prince's hair. Both her father and her grandfather suffered exile for years for the Stuart cause, and her cousin, Major Nairne, to whom she was married in 1806, only had his title restored late in life, in 1824. To his last day her father used to toast the health and happy restoration of the king "over the water"; when the newspaper was read to him he would not suffer the heads of the reigning house to be alluded to otherwise than by the initial letters K and Q; even in the Prayer Books which he gave his children the royal names were changed; and among the dearest treasures of Gask House were the bonnet, spurs, crucifix, and cockade which had been worn by the Prince, as well as the historic lock of his hair. So well known indeed were the prejudices of the Laird of Gask that George III. on one occasion when sending him a message of respect for his stern if mistaken principle, accompanied it with the compliments, not of the King of Great Britain, but of the Elector of Hanover. With this strong Jacobite feeling was no doubt mingled something of the pride of a race whose representatives had saved the life of David I. at Winchester, had held Stirling against Edward I., had been ennobled by James II., and had fallen at Flodden.

Laurence Oliphant married his cousin, Margaret Robertson, a daughter of Robertson of Struan, Chief of Clan Donnachy, and the poetess, their third daughter and fourth child, was born July 16, 1766. As if to set a seal upon her sympathies, she was named after the Prince whose cause had been so enwoven with the destinies of her house. As a young lady she was celebrated throughout her native district for her loveliness and charm, and became known as the Flower of Strathearn. She began early to write, and her songs became immediately popular, but like more than one other sweet singer of her time, she kept the fact of her authorship a profound secret even from those who were nearest and dearest. "Her own husband, Lord Nairne, I am credibly informed," wrote Professor Masson lately in his *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*, "remained ignorant to his dying day that his wife had been guilty of song-writing or any other kind of literary performance." When she contributed to R. A. Smith's *Scottish Minstrel* it was under the pseudonym of "B.B."—Mrs. Bogan of Bogan; and there are accounts of her mysterious visits to Purdie the publisher clad as a Scottish gentlewoman of the olden time.

Lady Nairne's Jacobite lyrics, though many of them remain among the finest, are not her only songs. Like her contemporary, Burns, she set herself frequently to write new words to some of the quaint and sweet old airs which had come down from the traditional past. Among such compositions are "The Land o' the Leal," to the old tune of "Hey now the day daws," of James IVth's time, and "The Laird o' Cockpen," to the air of "When she cam' ben she bobbit." "The Land o' the Leal" was for long believed to have been written by Burns, but corrected copies in Lady Nairne's writing have attested her authorship. The old words of "When she cam' ben she bobbit" were said to date from the days of Charles II., and formed a somewhat indelicate ditty. As improved by Burns for Johnson's *Museum* they were not without a certain spirit:—

O when she cam' ben she bobbit fu' low,
O when she cam' ben she bobbit fu' low,
And when she cam' ben she kissed Cockpen,
And then she denied that she did it at a'.

And wasna Cockpen richt saucy witha',
And wasna Cockpen richt saucy witha,'
In leaving the dochter of a lord,
And kissing a collier lassie and a'.

O never look doun, my lassie, at a',
O never look doun, my lassie, at a',
Thy lips are as sweet, and thy figure complete
As the finest dame's in castle or ha'.

Though thou ha'e nae silk and holland sae sma',
Though thou ha'e nae silk and holland sae sma',
Thy coat and thy sark are thy ain handywark,
And Lady Jean was never sae braw.

This, it will be seen, has none of the dry humour which makes Lady Nairne's song immortal. At a later day Miss Ferrier added two stanzas to the composition as Lady Nairne left it, but the addition, like most sequels, is no improvement.

With a genius which was equally at home in the pathetic, the humorous, and the patriotic, Carolina Oliphant remains not only the sweetest and most famous singer of the lost Jacobite cause, but far and away the greatest of all Scottish lyric poets of her sex, and in two of her pieces, the two above mentioned, it does not appear extravagant to say, she is not surpassed even by Burns himself.

A collected edition of the works of Lady Nairne was edited with a memoir by the Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D., in 1869, and has been reprinted again and again.

THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I'M wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John—
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal[1].
There's nae sorrow there, John;
There's neither cauld nor care, John—
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John;
She was baith guid and fair, John;
And, oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy is coming fast, John—
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

[1] loyal, true.

Ye were aye leal and true, John;
Your task's ended now, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John:
This warld's cares are vain, John;—
We'll meet and we'll be fain[1]
In the land o' the leal.

[1] glad.

THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN.

The Laird o' Cockpen, he's proud and he's great,
His mind is ta'en up wi' things o' the State:
He wanted a wife, his braw house to keep;
But favour wi' wooin' was fashous[1] to seek.

[1] troublesome.

Down by the dyke-side a lady did dwell;
At his table-head he thought she'd look well—
McClish's ae daughter o' Claverse-ha' Lea,
A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree.

His wig was weel pouther'd and as gude as new;
His waistcoat was white, his coat it was blue;
He put on a ring, a sword, and cocked hat,—
And wha could refuse the Laird wi' a' that!

He took the grey mare, and rade cannily,
And rapped at the yett o' Claverse-ha' Lea:
"Gae tell Mistress Jean to come speedily ben,—
She's wanted to speak to the Laird o' Cockpen."

Mistress Jean was makin' the elder-flower wine:
"And what brings the Laird at sic a like time?"
She put aff her apron and on her silk goun,
Her mutch[2] wi' red ribbons, and gaed awa doun.

[2] cap.

And when she cam' ben he bowed fu' low;
And what was his errand he soon let her know.
Amazed was the Laird when the lady said "Na";—
And wi' a laigh curtsey she turn'd awa'.

Dumbfoundered was he; but nae sigh did he gi'e,
He mounted his mare, and rade cannily;
And aften he thought as he gaed through the glen,
"She's daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen!"

CALLER HERRIN'.

WHA'LL buy my caller[1] herrin'? [1] fresh.
They're bonnie fish and halesome farin';
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
Dreamed ye aught o' our puir fellows—
Darkling as they faced the billows,
A' to fill our woven willows?

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're no brought here without brave daring:
Buy my caller herrin',
Hauled through wind and rain.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin',—
Wives and mithers, 'maist despairin',
Ca' them lives o' men.

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
Ladies clad in silks and laces
Gather in their braw pelisses,
Cast their necks, and screw their faces.

Caller herrin's no got lightly;
Ye can trip the spring fu' tightly;
Spite o' tauntin', flauntin', flingin',
Gow* has set you a' a-singin'.

Neebour wives, now tent my tellin':
When the bonnie fish ye're sellin',
At ae word be in your dealin',—
Truth will stand when a' thing's failin'.

* This song was written for Nathaniel Gow, son of the more celebrated Neil Gow, and also a musical composer.

THE AULD HOUSE.

Oh, the auld house, the auld house!
What though the rooms were wee?
Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there,
And bairnies fu' o' glee!
The wild rose and the jessamine
Still hang upon the wa':
How mony cherished memories
Do they, sweet flowers, reca'!

Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird,
Sae canty, kind, and crouse[1]!
How mony did he welcome to
His ain wee dear auld house!
And the leddy, too, sae genty[2],
That sheltered Scotland's heir,
And clipt a lock wi' her ain hand
Frae his lang yellow hair.

[1] cheerful, kind, and lively.

[2] neat, elegant.

The mavis still doth sweetly sing,
The blue-bells sweetly blaw;
The bonnie Earn's clear winding still,
But the auld house is awa'.
The auld house, the auld house!
Deserted though ye be,
There ne'er can be a new house
Will seem sae fair to me.

Still flourishing the auld pear tree,
The bairnies liked to see;
And oh, how often they did speir
When ripe they a' wad be!
The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
Aye rinnin' here and there;
The merry shout—oh! whiles we greet
To think we'll hear nae mair.

For they are a' wide scattered now,
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas! to her lang hame;
Not here will meet again.
The kirkyaird! the kirkyaird!
Wi' flowers o' every hue,
Sheltered by the holly's shade,
And the dark sombre yew.

The setting sun, the setting sun,
How glorious it gaed doun!
The cloudy splendour raised our hearts
To cloudless skies abune.
The auld dial, the auld dial,
It tauld how time did pass;
The wintry winds ha'e dung[1] it doun,
Now laid 'mang weeds and grass.

[1] driven.

THE LASS O' GOWRIE.*

'Twas on a simmer's afternoon,
A wee afore the sun gaed doun,
A lassie wi' a braw new goun
Cam' owre the hills to Gowrie.
The rosebud washed in simmer's shower
Bloomed fresh within the sunny bower;
But Kitty was the fairest flower
That e'er was seen in Gowrie.

To see her cousin she cam' there;
And oh! the scene was passing fair,
For what in Scotland can compare
Wi' the Carse o' Gowrie?
The sun was setting on the Tay,
The blue hills melting into grey,
The mavis and the blackbird's lay
Were sweetly heard in Gowrie.

O lang the lassie I had wooed,
And truth and constancy had vowed,
But cam' nae speed wi' her I lo'ed
Until she saw fair Gowrie.

* Another version of this song was written by William Reid, the Glasgow bookseller. Several versions are extant.

I pointed to my faither's ha'—
Yon bonnie bield ayont the shaw[1],
Sae lown[2] that there nae blast could blaw:—
Wad she no bide in Gowrie?

[1] building beyond the wood.
[2] sheltered.

Her faither was baith glad and wae;
Her mither she wad naething say;
The bairnies thocht they wad get play
If Kitty gaed to Gowrie.
She whiles did smile, she whiles did greet;
The blush and tear were on her cheek;
She naething said, and hung her head;—
But now she's Leddy Gowrie.

THE PLEUGHMAN.

THERE's high and low, there's rich and poor,
  There's trades and crafts eneuch, man;
But, east and west, his trade's the best
  That kens to guide the pleugh, man.

  Then, come weel speed my pleughman lad,
    And hey my merry pleughman:
  Of a' the trades that I do ken,
    Commend me to the pleughman!

His dreams are sweet upon his bed,
  His cares are light and few, man;
His mother's blessing's on his head,
  That tents[1] her weel—the pleughman.

[1] cares for.

The lark sae sweet, that starts to meet
  The morning fresh and new, man—
Blithe though she be, as blithe is he,
  That sings as sweet—the pleughman.

All fresh and gay, at dawn of day,
  Their labours they renew, man;
Heaven bless the seed, and bless the soil,
  And Heaven bless the pleughman!

THE ROWAN TREE.

O ROWAN TREE, O rowan tree! thou'lt aye be dear to me!
Intwined thou art wi' mony ties o' hame and infancy.
Thy leaves were aye the first o' spring, thy flowers the simmer's pride;
There wasna sic a bonnie tree in a' the country side.
O rowan tree!

How fair wert thou in simmer time, wi' a' thy clusters white,
How rich and gay thy autumn dress, wi' berries red and bright!
On thy fair stem were mony names which now nae mair I see,
But they're engraven on my heart—forgot they ne'er can be!
O rowan tree!

We sat aneath thy spreading shade, the bairnies round thee ran;
They pu'd thy bonnie berries red, and necklaces they strang.
My mother! O I see her still, she smiled our sports to see,
Wi' little Jeanie on her lap, and Jamie at her knee.
O rowan tree!

O there arose my father's prayer, in holy evening's calm;
How sweet was then my mother's voice in the Martyr's psalm!
Now a' are gane! we meet nae mair aneath the rowan tree!
But hallowed thoughts around thee twine o' hame and infancy.
O rowan tree!

"BONNIE RAN THE BURNIE DOUN."

Bonnie ran the burnie doun,
Wand'rin' and windin';
Sweetly sank the birds abune,
Care never mindin'.

The gentle simmer wind
Was their nursie saft and kind,
And it rockit them, and rockit them,
All in their bowers sae hie.
Bonnie ran, &c.

The mossy rock was there,
And the water-lily fair,
And the little trout would sport about
All in the sunny beam.
Bonnie ran, &c.

Though simmer days be lang,
And sweet the birdies' sang,
The wintry night and chilling blight
Keep aye their eerie roun'.
Bonnie ran, &c.

And then the burnie's like a sea,
Roarin' and reamin';
Nae wee bit sangster's on the tree,
But wild birds screamin'.

O that the past I might forget,
Wand'rin' and weepin'!
O that aneath the hillock green
Sound I were sleepin'!

Bonnie ran the burnie down,
Wand'rin' and windin';
Sweetly sang the birds abune,
Care never mindin'.

CHARLIE IS MY DARLING.*

'Twas on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
When Charlie cam' to our town,
The young Chevalier.

O Charlie is my darling,
My darling, my darling—
O Charlie is my darling,
The young Chevalier!

As he cam' marching up the street,
The pipes played loud and clear,
And a' the folk cam' running out
To meet the Chevalier.
O Charlie is my darling, &c.

Wi' Hieland bonnets on their heads,
And claymores bright and clear,
They cam' to fight for Scotland's right,
And the young Chevalier.
O Charlie is my darling, &c.

* Burns, Hogg, and Captain Charles Gray have each produced versions of this song.

They've left their bonnie Hieland hills,
  Their wives and bairnies dear,
To draw the sword for Scotland's lord,
  The young Chevalier.
    O Charlie is my darling, &c.

O there were mony beating hearts,
  And mony a hope and fear,
And mony were the prayers put up
  For the young Chevalier.

    O Charlie is my darling,
      My darling, my darling—
    O Charlie is my darling,
      The young Chevalier!

HE'S OWER THE HILLS THAT I LO'E WEEL.

He's ower the hills that I lo'e weel,
He's ower the hills we daurna name;
He's ower the hills ayont Dunblane,*
Wha soon will get his welcome hame.

My faither's gane to fecht for him,
My brithers winna bide at hame;
My mither greets and prays for them,
And, 'deed, she thinks they're no to blame.

The Whigs may scoff, the Whigs may jeer,
But ah! that love maun be sincere
Which still keeps true whate'er betide,
And for his sake leaves a' beside.

His right these hills, his right these plains;
O'er Hieland hearts secure he reigns;
What lads e'er did our lads will do;
Were I a laddie I'd follow him too.

* The western end of the Ochils is just visible from Gask House.

Sae noble a look, sae princely an air,
Sae gallant and bold, sae young and sae fair;
O did ye but see him ye'd do as we've done;
Hear him but once, to his standard you'll run.

He's ower the hills that I lo'e weel,
He's ower the hills we daurna name;
He's ower the hills ayont Dunblane,
Wha soon will get his welcome hame.

THE WHITE ROSE O' JUNE.*

Now the bricht sun, and the soft simmer showers,
Deck a' the woods and the gardens wi' flowers;
But bonnie and sweet though the hale o' them be,
There's ane abune a' that is dearest to me;
And O that's the white rose, the white rose o' June,
And may he that should wear it come back again sune!

It's no on my breast, nor yet in my hair
That the emblem dear I venture to wear;
But it blooms in my heart, and its white leaves I weet,
When alane in the gloamin' I wander to greet,
O'er the white rose, the white rose, the white rose o' June;
And may he that should wear it come back again sune!

Mair fragrant and rich the red rose may be,
But there is nae spell to bind it to me;
But dear to my heart and to fond memorie,

* The white rose was the Jacobite emblem.

Though scathed and though blighted the white rose
may be.
O the white rose, the white rose, the white rose o'
June,
O may he that should wear it come back again sune!

And oh! may the true hearts thy perils who share,
Remembered wi' tears and remembered in prayer,
Whom misfortune's rude blast has sent far awa',
Fair breezes bring back sune to cottage and ha';—
Then, O sing the white rose, the white rose o' June,
And may he that should wear it wear Scotland's auld
croun!

EBENEZER PICKEN.

1769-1816.

When Alexander Wilson in 1791 read his poem on the comparative merits of Ramsay and Fergusson before the debating society in the Edinburgh Pantheon, another unsuccessful competitor for the prize offered was his friend, Ebenezer Picken. Three years earlier, while still only nineteen, Picken had published a volume of "Poems and Epistles, mostly in the Scottish Dialect," with a glossary, and Wilson had hastened to hail his gift. These poems and their glossary, and a "Pocket Dictionary of the Scottish Dialect" which was published two years after the poet's death, remain philologically of great value, and were much used and quoted by Jamieson in his standard Scottish Dictionary.

Picken's life throughout was typical of the less fortunate class of poet. The son of a Paisley silk-weaver, and educated for the ministry of the United Secession church, he threw over his clerical prospects for the hazards of a literary life. In 1791 he opened a school in Falkirk, and married the daughter of Mr. Belfrage, minister of the Burgher Kirk there. For five years afterwards he struggled with poverty as teacher of an endowed school at Carron. In 1796 he tried business, unsuccessfully, in Edinburgh. Again he took to teaching, eked out by one or two literary endeavours. In 1813 he added to and republished his poems, and in 1815 he helped Dr. Andrew Duncan with a volume of monumental inscriptions from the Edinburgh graveyards. As a writer of songs, satire, and descriptive pieces, he earned some popularity, and several of his songs may still be heard. Much of his verse, however, and especially his epistolary poetry, merely echoes the note of Burns. To the last he was ground down by poverty. William Chambers, who knew him, describes him as well-meaning, but sadly handicapped.

Memoirs of Ebenezer Picken and his son Andrew, by R. Brown, were published in 1879.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Now Simmer's gowden beam withdrawn
Brings hoary Winter o'er the lawn,
While, drivin', cauld, in awfu' form,
Bauld Boreas aids the direfu' storm.
Nae langer blooms the flowery thorn,
Whase fragrant sweets perfumed the morn;
Nae mair o' pastime now, I ween—
The dance, the play, has left the green.
Nae mair our e'en blithe prospects cheer;
Stern Winter blin's them wi' a tear.
Ilk thing looks dowie, dowf, and wae[1],
Just like auld Nature's last decay;
And ilka hill and haugh and plain
Scarce hechts[2] that Spring will come again.
The herd, poor thing! through chillin' air,
Tends in the meads his fleecy care;
Dosened[3] wi' cauld and drivin' sleet,
Row'd in a coarse woo'en muirlan' sheet;
Or maybe, o'er the drift-clad brae,
Frae whare he hears the lambkins ba,

[1] sad, pithless, and woeful.

[2] promises.

[3] stupified.

He weary winds his road, and slaw,
To howk[1] them out frae 'mang the snaw.
Cauld wind soughs[2] through the leafless trees;
His tautie[3] locks are like to freeze.
Stieve[4] in his plaid ilk hand he rows,
And wi' his breath the cranreuch[5] thows,
Till ance ilk dinlin'[6] finger glows.
Winter's keen breath has made him yap[7];
He langs to see the parritch cap[8];
Sae up some hillock-tap or brae,
He bends his way, baith cauld and blae[9],
To see gif, o'er the neighbourin' dale,
The servant brings his mornin' meal.

Thinned is the foliage o' the grove
Whare wissfu' lovers wont to rove:
December sheets wi' ice the knowes,
And staps the burnie as it rows.
Now on its banks nae verdure shaws,
Nor birdie sings, nor blossom blaws;
But frae ilk bus' the tangles gay
Hang skinklin'[10] in the mornin' ray,
While ilka blast seems to conspire
To blaw out Nature's vital fire.

Yet, though ilk thing without looks cauld,
The ingle bleezes, warm and bauld,
And lang before the cock has crawn,
Or glintin' morn led in the dawn,
I wat there's mony a wight asteer
To glad his heart wi' New'rday cheer.

Now, though the vera skies sould fa'

[1] dig.
[2] sighs.
[3] shaggy.
[4] firm.
[5] hoarfrost.
[6] tingling.
[7] hungry.
[8] wooden dish.
[9] colourless, wan.
[10] sparkling.

In heavy flakes o' feathery snaw;
Though wintry rain a deluge pour,
The bitter, bitin' tempest roar,
Whirlin' destruction through the street,
And threatenin' heaven and earth to meet;
Yet spite o' Winter's drearest form,
The "first fit"* bauldly fronts the storm.
The maudlin' "het pint's" heavenly power
Has raised a flame that bangs[1] the shower— [1] overcomes.
That heaviest rain, in evendown drench,
And scarce a sea itsel' could quench.
The whelmin' ocean couldna choke it,
Nae mair than 't wad a Congreve's rocket.
Scrievin'[2] awa', he dreads nae harm; [2] Moving swiftly.
The glorious beverage, reekin' warm,
He dauntless bears; and, bent on fun,
Nor kebbuck hains[3], nor curran' bun. [3] Nor round of cheese spares.
Thus doubly armed, he onward plods,
Nor envies goddesses or gods.
Weel wat I, on Olympus tap
There's nowther sic a bit nor drap.
Happy that frien' whase door sae blest
Is doomed to welcome sic a guest!
There care nae shilpit[4] face can shaw: [4] colourless, shrunk.
He's boltit out amang the snaw.

* Immediately after twelve has struck on New Year's morning it is still largely the custom in Scotland for young men to start forth visiting. The first foot that crosses the threshold brings the luck for the year. Dark persons are esteemed specially fortunate, and as it is deemed unlucky to come empty-handed, the visitor brings with him bottle and cake.

Now, bonnie lasses, shun the street;
For ye'll be kissed by a' ye meet.
But aiblins[1] ye're sae ill to sair[2] o't
Ye'll no keep in the house the mair o't.
Weel, gang your wa's; love send ye speed!
I'se wat ye'll get your mou's weel pree'd[3].
Now the saft maid whase yieldin' heart
O' love's keen flame has dree'd[4] the smart,
Recks na, I trow, her want o' rest,
But dinks[5] her out in a' her best,
Wi' weel-airned mutch[6] and kirtle clean,
To wait the hour o' twal' at e'en.
Blithe hour, that on the passin' bell
Rings out the auld year's partin' knell!
Syne, whan she hears it strike, I wat,
Her modest heart gangs pittie-pat.
Fu' anxious now, she's on the watch,
And thinks, ilk breath, she hears the latch—
Starts frae the stool, wi' waterin' mouth,
To welcome ben the dear-lo'ed youth,
For wham 't had been her e'enin' care
Some gusty[7] beverage to prepare.
As aft she finds hersel' mista'en,
And, dowie, sits her down again.
Soon a quick, eager step draws near—
She's no deceived—it is her dear!
Her heart beats quick wi' sweet alarms;
She finds hersel' within his arms.
But here nae mair the musie tells:
We leave the lovers to themsel's.

1 mayhap.
2 serve.
3 tasted, proved.
4 suffered.
5 decks.
6 well-ironed cap.
7 savoury.

The wight oppressed wi' toil and care
Minds poortith[1] now, and debt, nae mair;
But sweetly bends the reamin' bicker[2],
To drown dull care in jaws[3] o' liquor.
Now mony a rantin'[4] feast, weel stored,
Saurs[5] sweetly on the rustic board.
The table brags its ample store,
That held a simple meal before.
The ale gangs roun', the e'enin' lang;
Auld age unbends, and joins the sang,
And while he blithely slacks his drouth,
Brags o' the feats o' early youth.
The laithfu' wooers' smirkin' e'en
In glints they wiss na to be seen,
Speak the saft language o' the heart,
And dread the minute they maun part;
Or maybe, seated side by side,
The strugglin' sigh they strive to hide,
And, laith love's raptures to delay,
Fix the lang-wiss'd-for, happy day.
Hail, Friendly Neighbours, cheerfu' thrang!
To you life's purest joys belang.
Care seinle[6] sours ye, air[7] or late,
Contentit wi' your humble state.
Far frae ambition's maddin' strife,
Ye spend a blithe and blameless life;
And though 'neath poortith's sair down-draw
Some o' ye fag your days awa',
And aften ha'e your ain ado,
Ye ha'e your blinks o' sunshine too:

[1] poverty.
[2] foaming vessel.
[3] floods.
[4] spirited.
[5] Savours.
[6] seldom.
[7] early.

The blithe New Year comes sweetly in,
And gi'es misfortune to the win'.
The rich are mair to mean[1] than you—
They've aften pine that scugs[2] the view;
Their joys parade, while yours are true.
E'en let them sport their giddy hours—
The show is theirs, the substance yours.
Your harmless mirth let wealth envy,
In fu'ness fret, and wonder why;
Ambition aye, we ken fu' weel,
Pretends to scorn the joys it canna feel.

[1] lament.
[2] pain that hides.

BLITHE ARE WE SET WI' ITHER.

BLITHE are we set wi' ither;
Fling care ayont the moon!
Nae sae aft we meet thegither
Wha wad think o' partin' soon?
Though snaw bend down the forest trees,
And burn and river cease to flow,
Though Nature's tide ha'e shored[1] to freeze,
And winter nithers[2] a' below,
Blithe are we, &c.

[1] offered, threatened.
[2] represses.

Now round the ingle cheerly met,
We'll scog[3] the blast, and dread nae harm;
Wi' jows[4] o' toddy, reekin' het,
We'll keep the genial current warm.
The frien'ly crack, the cheerfu' sang
Shall cheat the happy hours awa',
Gar pleasure reign the e'enin' lang,
And laugh at bitin' frost and snaw.
Blithe are we, &c.

[3] ward off.
[4] floods.

The cares that cluster roun' the heart,
And gar the bosom stoun[1] wi' pain,
Shall get a fright afore we part,
Will gar them fear to come again.
Then, fill about, my winsome chiels!
The sparklin' glass will banish pine;
Nae pain the happy bosom feels,
Sae free o' care as yours and mine.
Blithe are we, &c.

[1] ache.

PRETTY NELL.

THE sun glints o'er the lawn,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
How sweet the early dawn,
Pretty Nell!
Come, let us climb the brae
Where yonder herdies stray:
O do not say me nay,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
O do not say me nay,
Pretty Nell!

The dew is on the green,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
It sparkles like thy e'en,
Pretty Nell!
But, waukin' without thee,
Nae pleasure morn can gi'e;
Thy smile is a' to me,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
Thy smile is a' to me,
Pretty Nell!

Be beauties e'er sae fair,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
They want thy bonnie air,
Pretty Nell!

Though dinkit[1] e'er sae smart,
Yet a' their wily art
Shall never win my heart,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
Shall never win my heart,
Pretty Nell!

[1] decked.

Be misers rich for me,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
Our walth is on the lea,
Pretty Nell!
Sae lang's our awny[2] grain
Waves on the harvest plain,
We'll ha'e plenty o' our nain,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
We'll ha'e plenty o' our nain,
Pretty Nell!

[2] bearded.

To scug[3] frae sun and shower,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
I ha'e reared a bonnie bower,
Pretty Nell!
While, round, the saugh[4] inclines,
Its sides the woodbine lines,
Abune the ivy twines,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
Abune the ivy twines,
Pretty Nell!

[3] shield.

[4] willow.

Unseen by ilka e'e,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
I'll fondly sit by thee,
Pretty Nell!
There, while our lambkins play,
We'll list the woodland lay;
So do not say me nay,
Pretty Nell, pretty Nell!
So do not say me nay,
Pretty Nell!

WOO ME AGAIN.

WHAN Jamie first wooed me he was but a youth;
Frae his lips flowed the strains o' persuasion and truth.
His suit I rejected wi' pride and disdain,
But, O! wad he offer to woo me again!

He aft wad ha'e tauld me his love was sincere,
And e'en wad ha'e ventured to ca' me his dear:
My heart to his tale was as hard as a stane;
But, O! wad he offer to woo me again!

He said that he hoped I wad yield and be kind;
But I counted his proffers as light as the wind:
I laughed at his grief whan I heard him complain;
But, O! wad he offer to woo me again!

He flattered my locks, that were black as the slae;
[1] made much of. And fraised[1] my fine shape, frae the tap to the tae:
[2] scolded. I flate[2], and desired he wad let me alane;
But, O! wad he offer to woo me again!

Repulsed, he forsook me, and left me to grieve,
And mourn the sad hour that my swain took his leave;
Now, since I despised and was deaf to his mane,
I fear he'll ne'er offer to woo me again.

O wad he but now to his Jean be inclined,
My heart in a moment wad yield to his mind;
But I fear wi' some ither my laddie is ta'en,
And sae he'll ne'er offer to woo me again.

Ye bonnie young lasses, be warned by my fate;
Despise not the heart ye may value too late;
Improve the sweet sunshine that now gilds the plain;
With you it may never be sunshine again.

The Simmer o' life, ah! it soon flits awa',
And the bloom on your cheek will soon dow[1] in the snaw.
O think, ere you treat a fond youth wi' disdain,
That in age the sweet flower never blossoms again.

[1] fade, wither.

NAN OF LOGIE GREEN.

By pleasure long infected,
Kind heaven, when least expected,
My devious path directed
To Nan of Logie green.
Where thousand sweets repose 'em
In quiet's unruffled bosom,
I found my peerless blossom,
The pride of Logie green.

The city belle perchance aye
Will blame my youthful fancy;
But she ne'er saw my Nancy,
The pride of Logie green.
Her cheek the vermeil rose is,
Her smile a heaven discloses,
No lily leaf that blows is
So fair on Logie green.

Ye town-bred fair, forgive me!
Your arms must ne'er receive me;
Your charms are all, believe me,
Eclipsed on Logie green.

Forgive my passion tender!
Heaven so much grace did lend her,
As made my heart surrender
To Nan of Logie green.

No more the town delights me;
It's noisy tumult frights me;
I'll go where love invites me,
To Nan of Logie green.
My heart shall ne'er deceive her;
I ne'er in life shall leave her;
In love and peace for ever
We'll live on Logie green.

RICHARD GALL.

1776-1801.

One of the lesser lights in the constellation of Burns, Richard Gall survives by reason of a few sweet songs. Born of poor parents, at Linkhouse near Dunbar, he was apprenticed to a carpenter at the age of eleven. Some verses which he wrote attracted the notice of Burns and Macneill, and on the strength of that notice he broke his apprenticeship and took a post in the office of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. The promise of his youth was destroyed, however, by an abcess in the breast, which carried him off at the age of twenty-five. A collection of his songs, with a memoir by Alexander Balfour, was published in 1819.

MY ONLY JO AND DEARIE, O.

Thy cheek is o' the rose's hue,
My only jo and dearie, O;
Thy neck is o' the siller dew
Upon the bank sae brierie, O.
Thy teeth are o' the ivory;
O sweet's the twinkle o' thine e'e;
Nae joy, nae pleasure blinks on me,
My only joy and dearie, O.

The birdie sings upon the thorn
Its sang o' joy fu' cheery, O,
Rejoicing in the simmer morn,
Nae care to mak' it eerie, O.

Ah! little kens the sangster sweet
Aught o' the care I ha'e to meet,
That gars my restless bosom beat,
  My only jo and dearie, O.

When we were bairnies on yon brae,
  And youth was blinkin' bonnie, O,
Aft we wad daff[1] the lee-lang day,
  Our joys fu' sweet and mony, O.
Aft I wad chase thee o'er the lea,
And round about the thorny tree;
Or pu' the wildflowers a' for thee,
  My only jo and dearie, O.

[1] sport.

I ha'e a wish I canna tine[2],
  'Mang a' the cares that grieve me, O.
A wish that thou wert ever mine,
  And never mair to leave me, O.
Then I would dawt[3] thee night and day;
Nae ither warldly care I'd ha'e,
Till life's warm stream forgat to play,
  My only jo and dearie, O.

[2] lose.

[3] pet.

CRADLE SONG.

Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing:
O saftly close thy blinkin' e'e!
Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,
For thou art doubly dear to me.
Thy daddy now is far awa',
A sailor laddie o'er the sea;
But hope aye hechts[1] his safe return
To you, my bonnie lamb, and me.

[1] promises.

Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,
O saftly close thy blinkin' e'e!
Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,
For thou art doubly dear to me.
Thy face is simple, sweet, and mild,
Like ony simmer e'ening fa';
Thy sparkling e'e is bonnie black;
Thy neck is like the mountain snaw.

Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,
O saftly close thy blinkin' e'e!
Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,
For thou art doubly dear to me.
O, but thy daddie's absence, lang,
Might break my dowie heart in twa,
Wert thou na left, a dawtit[2] pledge,
To steal the eerie hours awa.

[2] cherished.

THE HAZLEWOOD WITCH.

For many lang year I ha'e heard frae my grannie
Of brownies 'and bogles by yon castle wa',
Of auld withered hags that were never thought canny,
And fairies that danced till they heard the cock craw.
I leugh at her tales, and last ouk, i' the gloaming
I dandered, alane, down the Hazlewood green;
Alas! I was reckless, and rue sair my roaming,
For I met a young witch wi' twa bonnie black een.

I thought o' the starns in a frosty night glancing,
Whan a' the lift round them is cloudless and blue;
I lookit again, and my heart fell a dancing;
Whan I wad hae spoken she glamoured my mou',
O wae to her cantrips! for dumpish I wander;
At kirk or at market there's nought to be seen;
For she dances afore me wherever I dander,
The Hazlewood witch wi' the bonnie black een.

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